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SUPER PLAY

ISSUE 6

APRIL 1993

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Super Play

Issue 6 April 1993

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SUPER PLAY EDITORIAL

FROM THE BIG CHAIR

AS THE WORLD TURNS

Our full contents listing starts just over the page

Things don't stand still around here, that's for sure. As well as our new price (sorry about that), we've got a few more changes for you this month – I'll tell you about them in a minute. First, though, a few highlights from this issue – we've got a giant feature on Japanese comics, and how they've influenced Super NES games, an in-depth look at *Starfox* (the first game to use Nintendo's new Super F/X chip), and more previews of games about to come out in the States and Japan than ever before. This is all stuff you just can't miss.

Then, on page 24, you can read the results of our Golden Bee reader's awards, voted for by *Super Play* readers. What did you think was the best shoot-'em-up of last year, or the best driving game? Which software house was most reliable? Was *Mario Kart really* better than *SFII*? See if you agree with the rest of the readers here.

Now for the changes. There are two new people to introduce you to this month, and one farewell. Farewell is to Traci Rochester, our art editor for the first five-and-a-half issues, who's moved onto pastures new. We wish her luck in her new ventures, and thank her for the sterling work she's done in getting this magazine off the ground, and raising its standards to the heights it can now boast. Cheers, Trace.

The first welcome is to her replacement, Lisa Nicholls, who some of you may remember from her work on *Amiga Power* or *Commodore Format*. Becoming art editor of *Super Play* is a well deserved promotion for her, and I know that she'll be ace. Welcome to the team, Lise. The other new face is Allan Brett's – he's the guy who won the National Computer Game Championships at the Future Entertainment Show last year, so he's got a fair claim to be one of the best games players in the country. He's also a massive Super Nintendo fan. This month he's brought his consummate gaming skills to *Super Play* with not one, not two, but three Player's Guides. There'll be more from him in the future.

Finally, I hope you enjoy the giant *Starfox* poster presented with the magazine this issue, and we'll see you next month. The best is yet to come!

Matt Bielby

Matt Bielby, Editor

INDEPENDENT SUPER NINTENDO MAGAZINE
SUPER PLAY

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STARFOX: THE FIRST SUP

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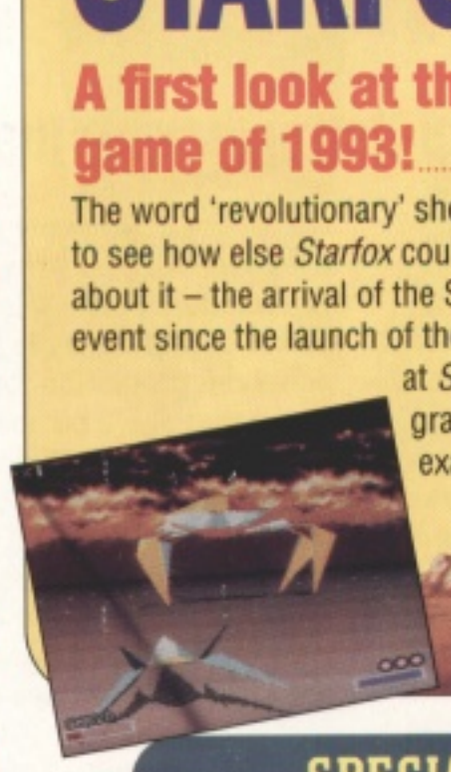
The word 'revolutionary' shouldn't be used lightly, but it's hard to see how else *Starfox* could be described. There's no two ways about it – the arrival of the Super F/X chip is the most important event since the launch of the SNES itself, and one look at *Starfox*'s amazing 3D graphics will show you exactly why...



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A Bee Team Production

...IP

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While we'd be fibbing slightly if we said we'd got reviews of lots of really *good* import games this month, it's certainly true to say that we're covering a fair number of *important* ones. *Ranma 1/2 Part Two*'s been causing a lot of fuss recently, being a spin-off from a top Japanese TV series. We discover that for some reason it's not quite as good as part one. *Aliens vs Predator* is another one we've been looking forward to – and one which, in the event, left us utterly cold. In fact, the two games we really liked this month came as something of a surprise: *Pro Baseball League '93*, and an off-beat Japanese shoot-'em-up *Flying Hero*. Check out the reviews for more.

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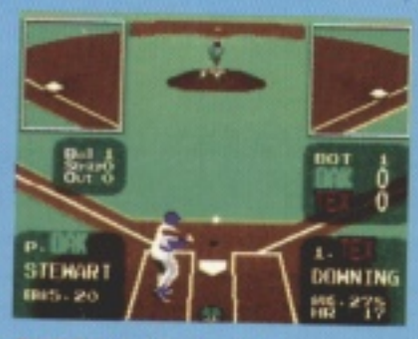

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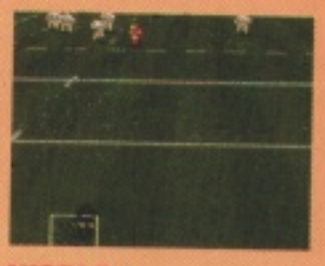

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SUPER EXP

This month's Super Express: The results of *Super Play*'s Golden Bee awards (what did you vote for?); an interview with one of Capcom's top men; and games, games, games. We've got more previews this issue than ever before...

Nintendo to split with Bandai

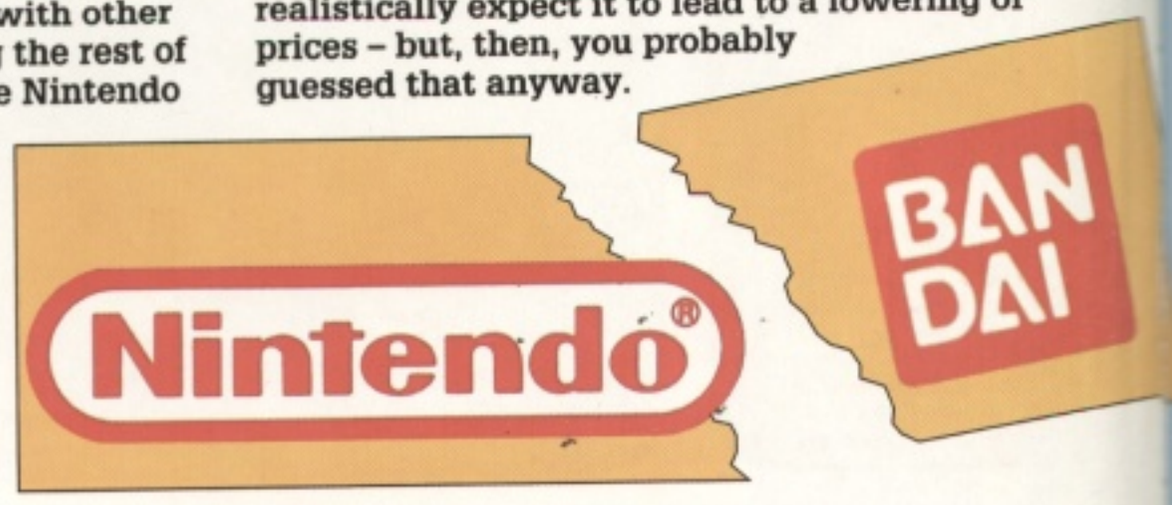
AND WHY THIS MIGHT PROVE IMPORTANT TO YOU

As *Super Play* went to press, rumours in the industry that Nintendo are about to split with Bandai, the Japanese toy giant whose UK branch has been handling Nintendo's business up until now, were confirmed. Bandai currently handles three important markets for Nintendo – the UK, France and the Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg), with other locally based distributers handling the rest of Europe (except for Germany, where Nintendo already has its own set-up).

However, despite great success (particularly with the Super Nintendo) over the last year, it seems Nintendo are now planning to handle *all* their own hardware and software distribution – though Bandai still get to keep Konami, Capcom, et al as a sort of sop to them.

None of this is likely to happen before April this year, however.

And the significance of all this to you? Well, it shows an increasing commitment on the part of Nintendo to the UK market, for one thing. We can only hope that means we'll get more official UK game releases, and more regularly too. Sadly, however, we can't realistically expect it to lead to a lowering of prices – but, then, you probably guessed that anyway.



MATT BIELBY

Earliest utterance: 'Car'
Scariest Dr Who monster: The Sea Devils
Always wanted to be: John Wayne
Number of addresses ever lived at: 14
Actor who should star in *The Matt Bielby Story*: Kevin Costner
Actor everyone else thinks should star in *The Matt Bielby Story*: Fred Savage
I like my hat because: It makes me look like Davy Crockett

SUE GRANT

Earliest utterance: 'Mine's a pint'
Scariest Dr Who monster: The Cybermen
Always wanted to be: A racing driver
Number of addresses ever lived at: 15
Actress who should star in *The Sue Grant Story*: Julie Walters
Actress everyone else thinks should star in *The Sue Grant Story*: Bonnie Langford
I like my hat because: My brother gave it to me

JASON BROOKES

Earliest utterance: 'The difference between PAL and SCART is...'
Scariest Dr Who monster: K-9
Always wanted to be: Japanese
Number of addresses ever lived at: 35(ish)
Actor who should star in *The Jason Brookes Story*: Wolf out of The Gladiators
Actor everyone else thinks should star in *The Jason Brookes Story*: Lisa Nicholls
I like my hat because: I've got a great eye for colour, me

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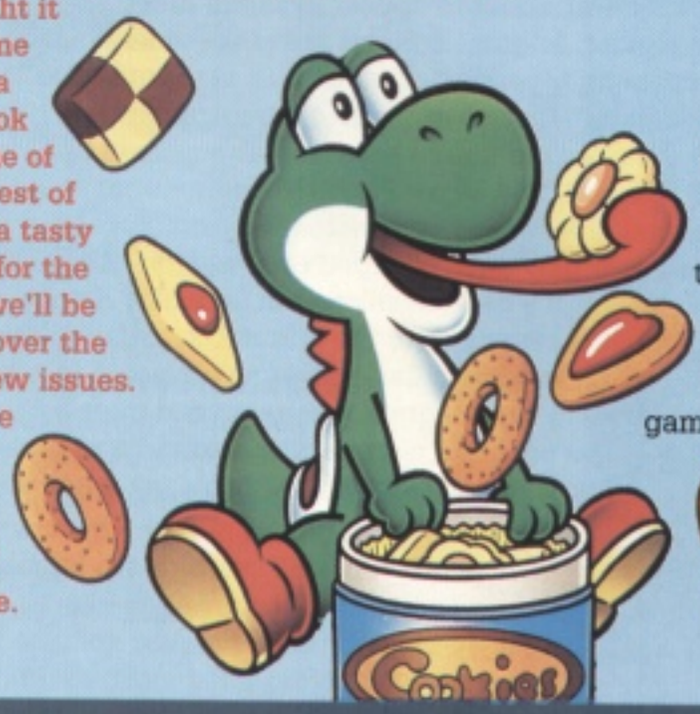
All the new games that are fit to print!

SPRING PREVIEW SPECIAL

Following our Consumer Electronics Show (CES) report last issue, and taking heed of the massive number of new games lined up for release from Japanese and American companies over the next few months, we thought it high time we took a good look at some of the best of them, as a tasty teaser for the reviews we'll be running over the next few issues. There are some real goodies here, as you'll see.



YOSHI'S COOKIE (Nintendo/Bullet-Proof Software)

Another of Nintendo's games using their most popular family of characters (Mario, et al) in a non-platform game environment, *Yoshi's Cookie* is a *Tetris*-based puzzle game. You have to arrange the cookies on screen in order, so that they disappear, which clears the stage. At first you start off with two types of cookie, but it builds up to six eventually, the game getting harder and harder as you progress through it.

Perhaps the niftiest bit is the two-player 'vs' mode, where you can choose one of four characters – Yoshi, Mario, Koopa or Princess Daisy – each of whom has his or her own special advantages (Yoshi plays a very defensive game, for instance). Despite the fact that we've seen many similar games before, *Yoshi's Cookie* is bound to be very well done, and therefore a big hit. We'll be reviewing it in detail very soon.

Yoshi's Cookie is but the latest of the current crop of *Tetris* lookalikes.

JONATHAN DAVIES

Earliest utterance: 'Weetabix'
Scariest Dr Who monster: The mummies
Always wanted to be: Fighter pilot
Number of addresses ever lived at: 5
Actor who should star in *The Jonathan Davies Story*: Sean Connery
Actor everyone else thinks should star in *The Jonathan Davies Story*: Roger Moore
I like my hat because: I wouldn't give a XXXX for any other hat

LISA NICHOLLS

Earliest utterance: 'Puppy Dog!'
Scariest Dr Who monster: The Cylons (*Doh! – Ed.*)
Always wanted to be: A rock 'n' roll star
Number of addresses ever lived at: 11
Actress who should star in *The Lisa Nicholls Story*: Patsy Kensit
Actress everyone else thinks should star in *The Lisa Nicholls Story*: Sandra Dickinson
I like my hat because: It keeps my ears warm

JEREMY BRIDGEMAN

Earliest utterance: 'Ghee' (trans: 'drink')
Scariest Dr Who monster: Davros
Always wanted to be: An architect
Number of addresses ever lived at: 3
Actor who should star in *The Jez Bridgeman Story*: Jeff Goldblum
Actor everyone else thinks should star in *The Jez Bridgeman Story*: Gonzo out of *The Muppets*
I like my hat because: It's American

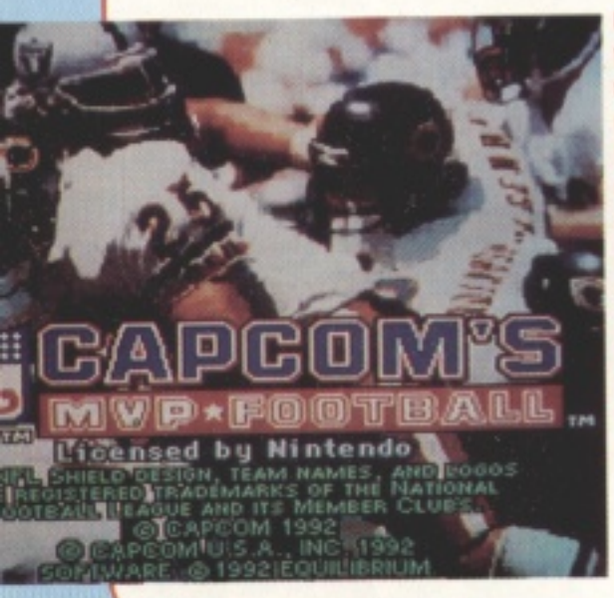
SUPER PLAY PROFILES QUIZ

Despite the injection of fresh blood, amusing tales are thin on the ground this month. Still, here's a poser: Which member of the *Super Play* team, as a child, used to be deliberately abandoned in supermarkets by his or her parents. They'd hide behind the baked beans, watching with sadistic glee. If you think you know, send the answer to: Supermarket Ordeal, *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. You might win a T-shirt! Last month's answer (the wet trousers thing): Jonathan Davies. The winner was Paul Clements of London.

SPRING
PREVIEW SPECIAL

MVP Football
(Capcom)

Electronic Arts, watch out! Up until now, Capcom – despite being dab hands at beat-'em-ups, platform games, shoot-'em-ups and many other popular genres – have never actually turned their hand to a SNES sports game. Until now, that is. *MVP Football*, revelling in its official NFL licence, is a one-or two-player game, offering a few unusual features – a coaching mode, allowing you to change plays mid-game, and a special MVP (this stands for Most Valuable Player) option, giving you set situations to cope with (almost like the chess puzzles in posh newspapers), instead of forcing you to play through a whole game. Add to these features weather and field conditions, TV-show style graphics, and so on, and you've got a serious contender for best American football game. Look for the game on US release in March – we should have our review next issue.



Okay, okay, so you can't really see what the game looks like from this shot, but rest assured, it's from Capcom, so it'll look *good*! EA and other sports-meisters had better look to their laurels.

Dead Dance
(Jaleco)

It's tempting to say next-to-nothing about this one – after all, it's a beat-'em-up, it's very *Street Fighter II*-like in looks, it features special moves like Ryu's Dragon Punch, and it's coming soon. The rest you can probably make up for yourselves...

***Street Fighter II* fans! You can't possibly be suffering from withdrawal symptoms caused by a lack of lookalike games (they're all over the place), but if you *still* need another one, Jaleco's *Dead Dance* looks as fine as any.**

First Samurai
(Kemco)

Remember the Amiga version of this? Well, *First Samurai* on SNES looks almost exactly the same!

Looks familiar? That's because it probably is – this is the Super NES conversion of Vivid Image/Image Works' *First Samurai*, about to appear in Japan under the Kemco banner. In-game screens are almost identical to the computer version's (which is to say, very good looking indeed), though quite how much gameplay's been tweaked we don't know. Mev Dinc, creator of First Samurai, told *Super Play*: 'The game's out in Japan at the end of June, I believe (*Kemco actually posted an earlier release date, but they may have changed their minds – Ed*), and Europe soon after that. It's been developed in Japan by Kemco, but they've kept close to the original concept. I've been play-testing an almost finished version now, in fact, and it's great – it's got bigger opponents and more variety than the first one, and more sampled sound and background music too. I really like it.' You can't say fairer than that.

Aladdin
(Capcom)

One of the games Capcom announced they are developing at the American CES is *Aladdin*, based on the smash hit Disney cartoon, yet to be released in the UK, but wowing audiences in America. *Aladdin*, the follow-up to *Beauty & The Beast*, features a giant blue genie, voiced by actor Robin Williams, as well as many sequences ideal for transformation into a platform game (as this, undoubtedly, will be). These include a rooftop chase across old Baghdad (or wherever it's meant to be) and a high-speed flying carpet ride through a collapsing, lava-filled cave. Expect something at least as previous SNES Disney collaboration, *Mickey's Magical Quest*. They'll be a US release towards the end of '93, but no news as to when it'll officially reach the UK.

Capcom's *Aladdin* is still at too early a stage to show you any pics of it, so here's the film instead. We've seen it and

Goof Troop

(Capcom)

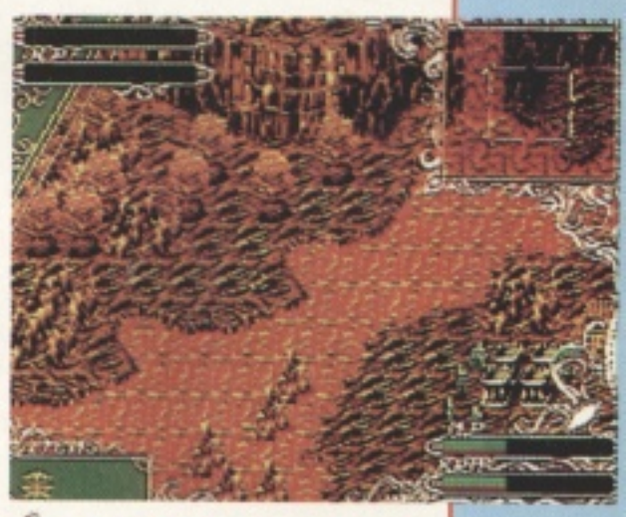
Before *Aladdin* arrives, we'll see Capcom's second Disney-based game – *Goof Troop*, featuring Goofy and his son Max (heaven knows who his mother was...) in an adventure based on the current American *Goof Troop* TV show. The plot has a bunch of pirates kidnapping Goofy's pals Pete and PJ on a fishing trip – time for Goofy and Max to infiltrate their South Pacific island fortress, avoiding various traps and challenges on the way. A two-player game, it features an unusual top-down viewpoint (almost *Gauntlet*-like in perspective), allowing both of you to play at the same time. Look for a release around September this year (though goodness knows if the TV show will ever make it to this side of the Atlantic or not.)

The traditional Goofy, as you and I know him, (above), and now with son Max in *Goof Troop* (right).

Dragon's Earth

(Human)

Fans of Datebook will have noticed a few odd-sounding games cropping up over the months ('*The Devil's Psychology Game*', anyone?), some of which (at least) it's tempting to put down to bad translation. When we first heard of *Dragon's Earth* in the original Japanese, it seemed possible to translate it two ways – as Dragon's Earth, or as Dragon's, um, Posterior. Luckily, we went with the right one, and now the game's out in Japan it's possible to ascertain what the actual game is behind the name – it's a very pretty RPG/strategy thing, featuring some particularly lovely dragons (of course), sabre-tooth tigers, et al. Once again, the game is unlikely to get an English-language release, so this might just be the last you ever read about it here...

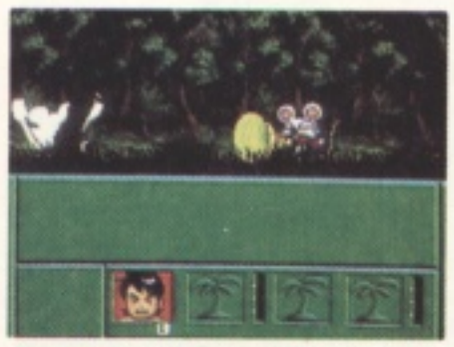


So, what you really want from a game are some nice looking dragons, eh? Then you've come to the right place – they don't come much nicer than the ones in *Dragon's Earth*, the latest big RPG to sweep to vast popularity in Japan, this one put together by the generally excellent Human. The graphics are very intricate, with lots of excellent little characters cropping up all over the place – both man and beast.

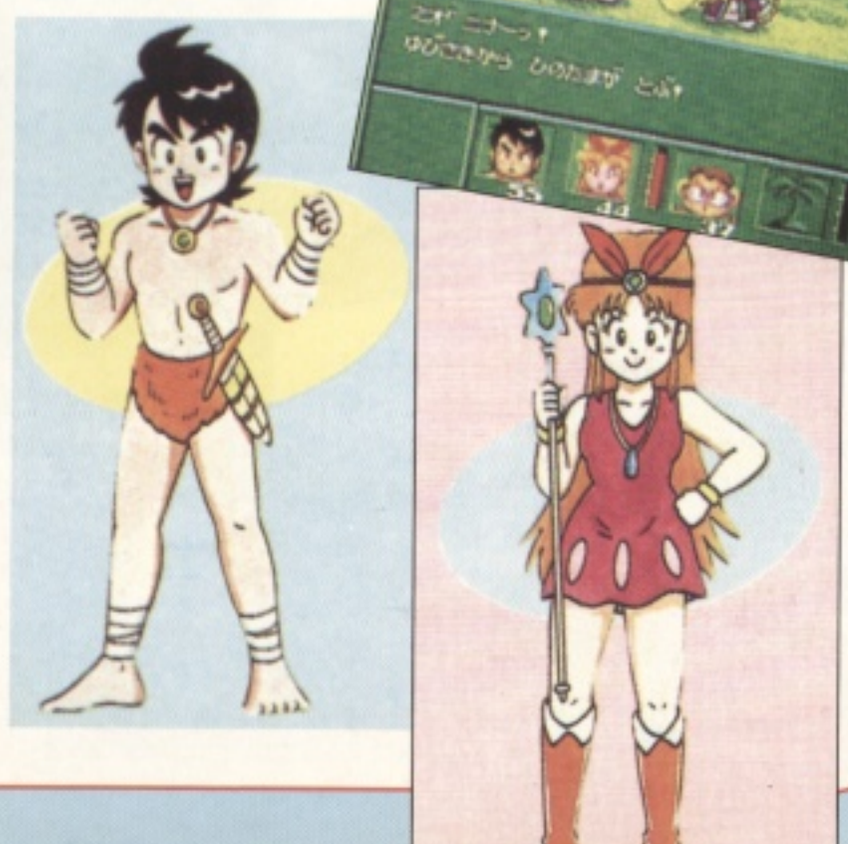
Jungle Wars 2

(Pony Canyon)

Those with longish memories will remember top games creator Peter Molyneux (*Populous*, *Powermonger*, etc) slagging the predecessor to this one off in his Japanese show report (issue 2), and he's certainly right in saying the games ain't too spectacular graphically. This new one comes across as a *Zelda*-style light RPG (but set in a jungle, of course), coupled with odd side-viewed fighting bits. Of course, it'll probably never get a release over here, so it all hardly matters.



***Jungle Wars 2* uses the still fantastically popular *Zelda*-style viewpoint to tell its story of Tarzan-style heroes, heroines and funny animals. It doesn't *all* take place in the jungle, though – there are desert bits, mountain sections and so on too. The RPGish fighting bits are pretty strange, by the look of things.**



SPRING PREVIEW SPECIAL

Super Mega Man

(Capcom)

Long running – and ultra-popular – NES game series *Mega Man* is about to hit the Super Nintendo. This will be, amazingly, the ninth *Mega Man* game (there've been five on NES and three on Game Boy), and is likely to follow the same, ultra-cute platform-based lines as the earlier models.

If you don't know this guy, you obviously never had a NES. Mega Man has sold more games than anyone short of the fat plumber himself. (Screenshot from NES version below.)

Super Wagan World 2

(Namcot)

Super Wagan World is a cute action game aimed more at the younger (and crapper) gameplayer – the point being, it isn't all that hard. The plot has the evil Galgan coming from space to conquer Wagan World, and you have to fight him off through a whopping 55 stages, each with a boss you have to beat in a mini puzzle game (there's not a fight to be found).

This cute little green dinosaur is your hero – a cuddly, friendly character for a cuddly, friendly game. This is what you might call your beginners' platform game – it ain't exactly hard to complete.

Final Fight II

(Capcom)

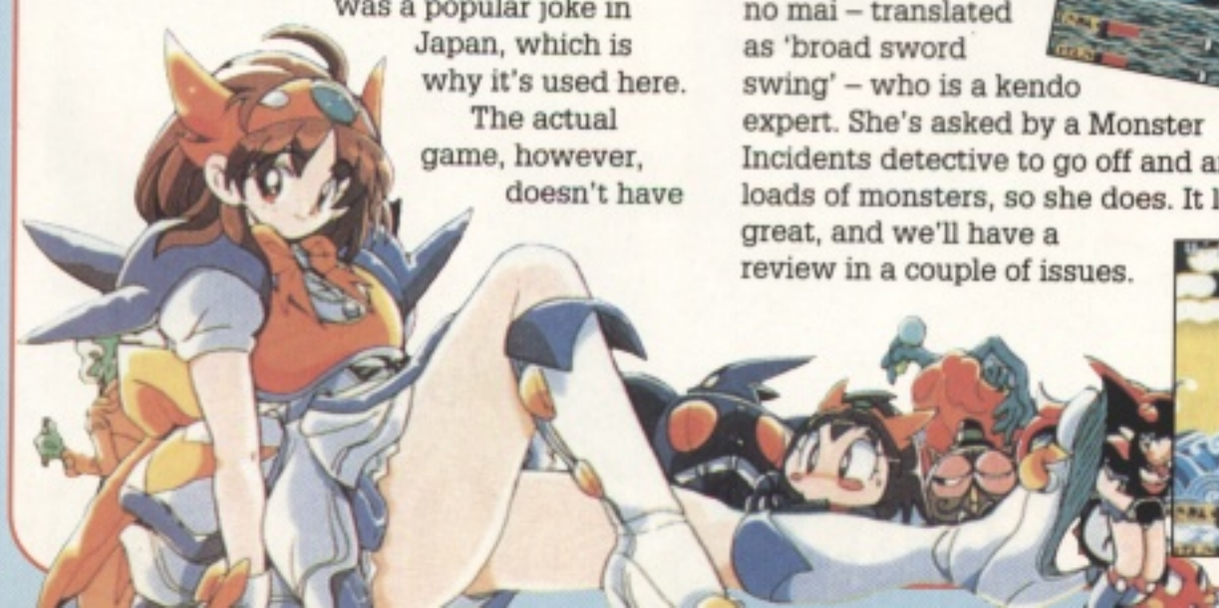
Currently under development, this was another big game to cause a stir at the CES. Considering the quality of the original *Final Fight*, and the advances made by Capcom since then, this seems certain to become the best walking-along-and-killing-things beat-'em-up on a home system yet – the addition of a two-player mode (the only thing really missing from the first game) is just the icing on the cake. Don't expect to see the game until late Summer though.

The original *Final Fight* was easily the best walking-along-and-hitting-people game on Super Nintendo, and now it's even better!

'Don't Lose!', Evil Kendo

(Datam Polystar)

You want weird game names? You got 'em! *Evil Kendo* is pronounced 'makendo', which sounds (to the Japanese) a bit like McEnroe (as in John McEnroe, the tennis player). This was a popular joke in Japan, which is why it's used here. The actual game, however, doesn't have anything to do with tennis, but kendo – the martial art using a sword. It's about a girl called Tsu-rugi no mai – translated as 'broad sword swing' – who is a kendo expert. She's asked by a Monster Incidents detective to go off and arrest loads of monsters, so she does. It looks great, and we'll have a review in a couple of issues.



Quite what all the monsters in *'Don't Lose!', Evil Kendo* have done to deserve being arrested we don't know, nor do we know why this cute young girl is the one chosen to do the arresting. However, we *do know* that it makes for one intriguing – and good-looking – game, and that's the sort of knowledge that counts, right?

Back To The Future 2

(EMI)

A bit late in the day, perhaps, but EMI are about to produce a new *Back To The Future* game, this one more a sidewards-scrolling cute actioner than previous efforts on other systems. This 8 Mbit cart features various sections, including the high speed skateboard bits here. More details as we get them.

This cute, big-headed, big-eyed Marty McFly sprite adds a lot of character to *Back To The Future 2*, the game.

Cosmo Gang: The Puzzle

(Namcot)

Remember these cute little *Galaxian*-lookalikes from *Super Play* 3? Well, now they're back, but this time they're in a cute *Tetris*-type affair (currently the in-thing it seems, what with *Yoshi's Cookie*, et al). It's just a quick glimpse – we'll look at the game in more detail next month.

Remember what we said about *Yoshi's Cookie* being but one of a number of *Tetris* lookalikes around at the moment? Well here's another one.

Devil's Course

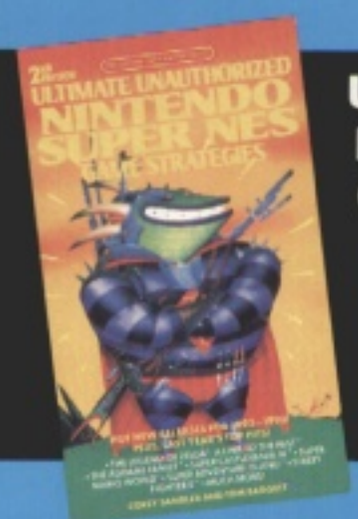
(T & E Soft)

Fans of previous T&E Soft golf games – things like *Pebble Beach Golf Links*, *Waialae Country Club* and the like, all using the same game engine – will be pleased to hear that the company's most radical golf game yet has recently be released in Japan. It contains some giant waterfalls, soaring towers of rock, sheer cliff faces and other dangerous (and certainly unusual) features, to create something not unlike a giant-sized crazy golf game. (Goodness knows how well it all works, though.)

Sick and tired of boring, 'ordinary' golf courses? Then look no further.

BOOKS

Jonathan Davies pushes his half-moon spectacles up his nose and examines the latest in Super Nintendo reading material.



ULTIMATE UNAUTHORISED NINTENDO SUPER NES GAME STRATEGIES

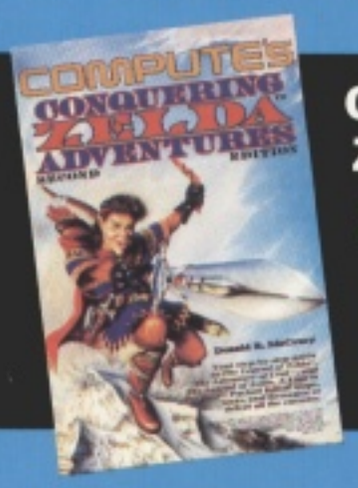
2ND EDITION

Corey Sandler, Tom Badgett.
Bantam Books, 350pp, £4.99.
ISBN 0-553-56123- 5

For a book with such a long name, this is very small. Dimension-wise, that is – it's the size of an ordinary paperback, rather than the usual big, glossy affair you'd normally expect. But it packs an immense amount into its 350-odd pages.

Unfortunately, a disproportionate amount of it consists of rehashed instructions. Why do they bother? While there's something to be said for having all the information in one place, it's pretty depressing flicking through page after page of plot-lines and control explanations. The authors also attempt to provide a brief critique of each game, but this is something the Americans never seem to have much success with.

Apart from that, the book's smashing. Given that it's such a compact volume, and that over 50 games are covered, it can hardly be expected to reveal every last detail of *Mario World* or *Zelda*. But there's a surprising amount of well-researched information in there. Cheats are usually given if they exist. The tips are generally good and solid. There's some handy background info on the SNES (and a sadly out-of-date CD ROM bit). And it's great value, too.



COMPUTE'S CONQUERING ZELDA ADVENTURES

2ND EDITION

Donald R McCrary.
Compute Books, 210pp, £11.95.
ISBN 0-87455-270-2

This is another of those books that covers a whole series of games. In other words, you're going to have to wade through pages of NES material before you get to the juicy Super Nintendo bits.

It's all in here, though. The information is laid out in the form of a walk-though, in much the same way as our Super Player's Guide to *Zelda* in issues 2 and 3. This is fine if that's what you're after, but it makes it harder just to dip into for the odd hint here and there. If, for example, you weren't sure what the Magic Hammer did, with Prima's *Zelda III* book (reviewed in issue 3) you'd just look up 'Magic Hammer' in the 'Items' chapter and all would be revealed. With the Compute book, however, you've got to leaf through until you get to the relevant location in the game, hunt through the text for the appropriate reference, and take it from there.

So the usual rule applies, really: if you've got all three *Zelda* games, this is probably the cheapest way of covering them all; but if you've only got *Zelda: A Link To The Past*, skip it and go for the Prima book.

These books can be bought in all good bookshops or, failing that, from Computer Manuals Ltd, whose phone number is (021) 706 6000 and whose address is 50 James Road, Tyseley, Birmingham B11 2BA.

PLASTIC FANTASTIC!

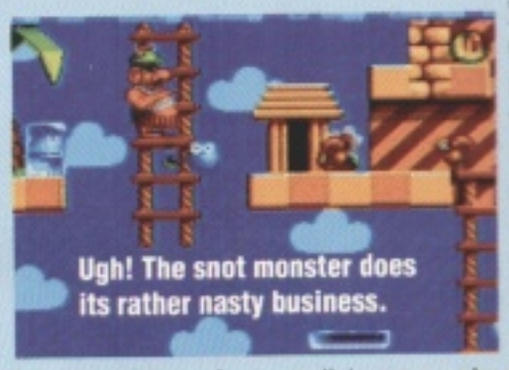
Amiga hit comes to the Super Nintendo

Putty

(System 3)

At the beginning of the game you get this neat get-to-know-your-movements bit. Here Putty (the blue thing) has a stretch.

Putty throws a punch at some critter.



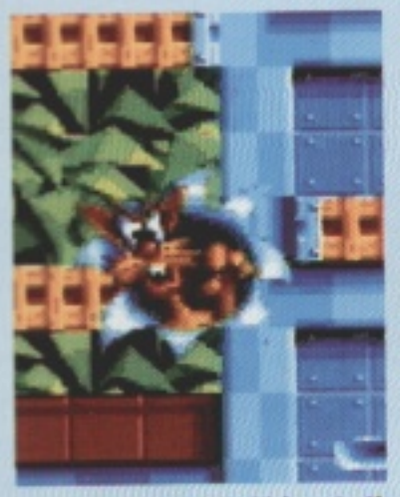
Ugh! The snot monster does its rather nasty business.

There are platform games, and then there are platform games, and the SNES has its fair share of both good and bad. However, what it doesn't have are many platform games as original as this one, a bizarre, colourful, sensual overload of a game, featuring an appealing blob as its central character, an array of excellent villains, and some of the best sampled speech and sound effects yet heard.

Putty is, of course, the SNES incarnation of System 3's successful Amiga release of the same name from Autumn '92. The game is divided into six worlds, built up of smaller levels – each of these is about three screens tall, and takes place on a network of platforms which are, apparently, a tower being built up towards Putty Moon. Putty is climbing the tower to get home, but – oh no! – arch villain Dazzledaze has sent his minions to stop you. Not only that, the friendly, solar-powered robots who're building your tower have a big limitation – when night falls, they tend to go mad and fall off! It's Putty's job to save the three or four robots he'll find on each level, transporting them individually to a safe haven where they can spend the night, which isn't as easy as it sounds.

What makes the game, though is the amount of imagination and character it displays throughout – these incredibly busy screens are packed with enough weird baddies, weapons, and incidental characters, to send your head spinning when you first see the game. Even better, great digitised speech samples permeate the action – there are said to be even more of these on Super NES that there were on the Amiga – giving each sprite his own distinct character. (Just wait till you see Dweezle or Uncle Ted, for instance.) Putty himself can do all sorts of stuff – bounce, stretch, punch (yes, really) or even absorb other characters, and he needs to take on the properties of some of his absorbees to get past certain sections of the game.

Putty will be available in May in the UK (US and Japanese releases will actually come much later for once!), and will be the first of a handful of games from System 3. Expect *Dawn Of Steel* (a rejigged version of their *Myth*) later on, with the very different *Putty II* showing its face at the end of the year.



Dweezle the cat (left) bursts through the screen to torment Putty when he fails to do something. Nice colours throughout the game.

Putty stretches, one eye on each half of his bod.

'UNFAIR' GAME PRICES

Will the government force them lower?

Do you think Nintendo game prices are too high? If so, you're not alone – you might have more powerful friends than you know in the battle to force them down. We're referring, of course, to the Office Of Fair Trading, who've been interested in the affairs of Nintendo and Sega since early '92. Up until now the OFT has seemed content to simply 'monitor' the console giant's activities, but a recent Christmas/post-Christmas spate of anti-console news stories (see last issue) – some focussing on the outrageous prices of game carts – seems to have spurred further action.

However, it doesn't look likely that a decision will be made on whether or not to refer the case to the Monopolies & Mergers Commission for a while. If it is, a report will be compiled, the Department Of Trade & Industry will look at it, and if they decide action is needed the two companies may be forced to lower their prices. The question here isn't whether Nintendo and Sega dominate the market – as clearly they do – but whether they are using that to force prices artificially high. We'll keep you posted.

BUY ME, YA FRAG HEADS!

The main man arrives on Super Nintendo

Ocean are to do a SNES game based on DC's violent Lobo 'hero', perhaps the only really hot DC book to be launched in the last year. Lobo is a sort of heavy metal biker killing machine from the future, and the comics are blackly humorous all-action things, with extremely grizzly art-work from late '80s comic megastar Simon Bisley. No ideas of what it'll be like yet, but expect it to be hot!

© DC Comics

GET THE PUZZLE GAME OF THE YEAR NOW ON YOUR SUPER...

SUPER NINTENDO

ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

PAL VERSION

G. I. Ant™ is a soldier ant. He's extremely clever, and highly trained in tactical manoeuvres. What's more he's extraordinarily strong and super smart! His latest mission is to gain access to the crazy world of Captain Rat's Treasure Caves. **Very straightforward...NOT!**

You see, this particular cave is a tunnel entrance to Domino Domain - a mini-world comprised of nine different continents. G.I. must negotiate many screens of mind-teasing problems. Each level has a door to the next. To open the door, the "Trigger" domino-block must be felled by causing a chain reaction with all of the other domino-blocks in that level.

Pretty easy...NOT!

Original Nintendo Seal of Quality

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Here he is again – it's Peter Evans, programmer, gameplayer, all-round Renaissance man, and Super Play's correspondent in Japan. And this month he's wearing headphones...

LIVE FROM HELL CITY

MUZAK MAESTRO, PLEASE!

Not wishing to be accused of being an ignorant savage, I'm now directing this column's seemingly boundless energies to the subject of popular music in Japan. Yes – the Japanese listen to pop music too, except that it's rather different to the stuff we're familiar with in the UK. And they take a totally different approach to the whole pop world.

First, however, a brief language lesson. 'Donna ongaku ga suki desu ka?' This, for those readers who don't attend Japanese lessons three nights a week (like I have to), means: 'What kind of music do you like?' As for me, I'm completely indiscriminate and like almost anything. With the exception of Punk and Thrash Metal, that is. (Sorry guys, I like to hear myself think.)

So where does one look to find pop music in Japan? In the usual places, of course: the radio, on TV, and in the shops. In some areas, canned music is piped to all the street corners during shopping hours. Harajuku is a good place to try – and Sunday's are best.

Busking in glory

This Summer, while browsing around Shibuya, the following occurred: There was a large group of people standing around the entrance of a department store watching, or competing in, a *Super Hang-On* challenge. (The *Super Hang-On* arcade machine, which is shaped like a motorbike, is still big here.) This was all well and good, especially as the attendants were all female with endless legs. Being completely useless at action games, I just stood and watched the 'cutes'. (Ooh – sexist comment! They have those in Japan, too.) Clearly, riding on brightly coloured motorbikes is a strictly male thing, but the OLs (Office Ladies, if you recall) obviously enjoyed watching.

After about five minutes of this, a truck pulled up with a load of musical instruments on-board. Five young men jumped out, climbed into the back, picked up the instruments and belted out a couple of hard rock numbers before bowing, thanking the audience profusely and driving away. Very educational, very loud and quite entertaining.

The band had instantly acquired a large audience through a couple of very simple measures. One: they looked for a crowd and set up right next to them. And two: they drowned out all other distractions. An interesting, and it seems successful, market ploy.

Different wavelengths

But let's get back to the subject, starting with radio. Radios are things with knobs or buttons on. They draw on the power of the metaphysical plane, translating what they find there into electrical waves through the use of components such as condensers, resistors, valves and transducers. After amplification by a couple more valves and things, they emerge from the huge horn-loaded erkmographs as sound waves. (*We apologise for the temporary interruption in our columnist's sanity. Normal service etc – Ed.*) However, you all know how your radio works – it's different from a Super Famicom, which uses much smaller valves.

Music on the radio takes very few forms here in Japan. In fact, there are

So where d'you buy Japanese pop music then? In shops like this store in the Shinjuku district, of course!

Above: The man himself, Peter Evans.
Background: Yep, it's another gratuitous pic of Tokyo to get you 'in the mood'.

Strategically placed around this page: A selection of the cute girl pop idols who sell records by the truckload. (To Western eyes they're virtually interchangeable.)

SE!

just two major radio stations. There's NHK, which could be likened to Radio 3 back in the golden age of radio` (circa 1966?). It makes good listening for classical music fans, and people who're looking for something else on Japanese radio, other than three men talking in silly voices. Classical music is good for the soul, I reckon. It's also good accompaniment when you're blasting down motorways. Organ music is especially good for this: not much beats storming down the M1 to the strains of Bach's *Toccata* and *Fugue In D Minor*. It also unnerves other drivers. (Here in Japan, driving is measured in kilometres – and very slowly at that. On the one occasion I tried taking the car to work, it took around two hours to drive the 10km from my home to the office!)

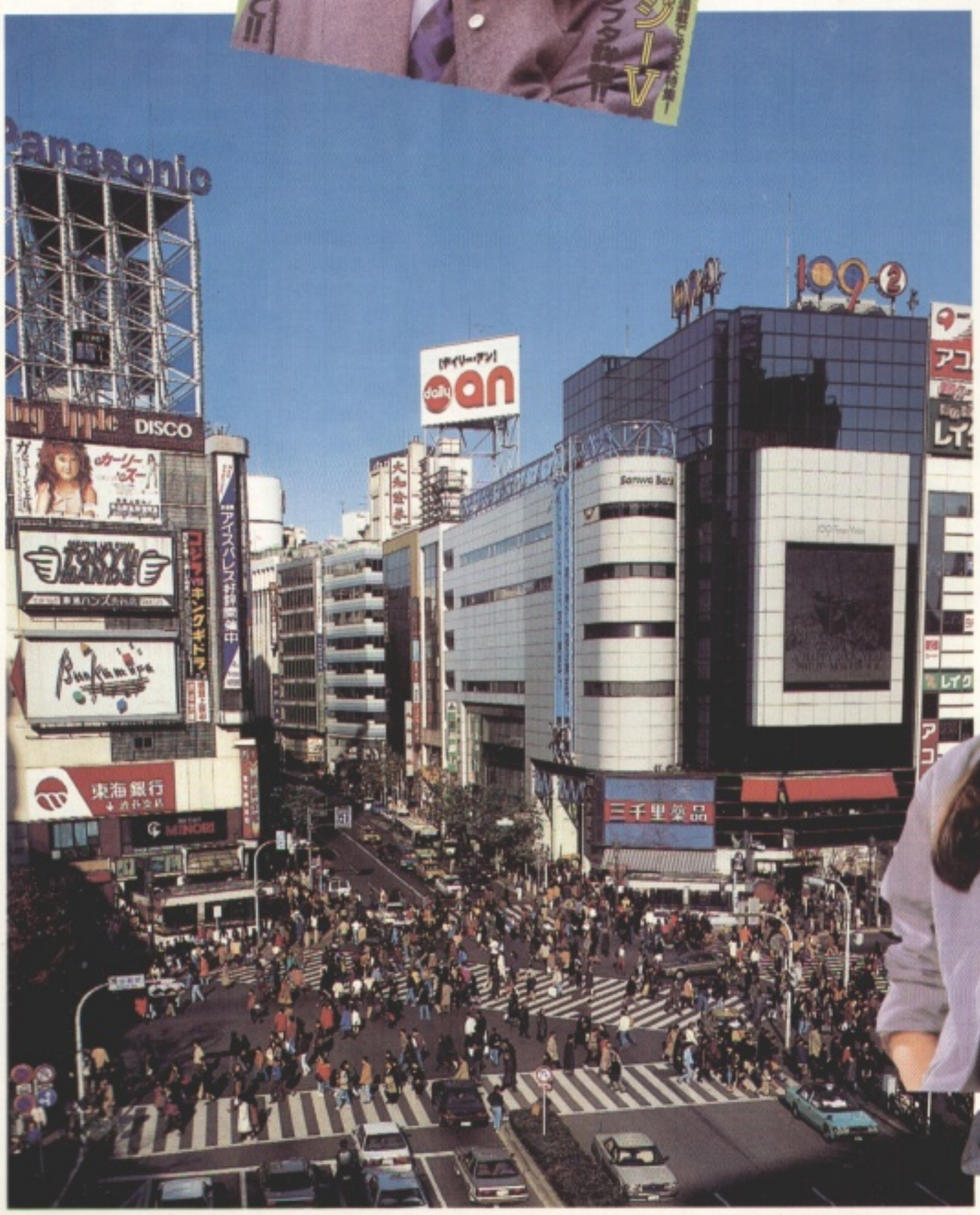
The other main radio station is J-WAVE, otherwise known as 81.3 FM. This is how Radio 1 *should* be. It's very American, but one can't have everything. All the shows are bilingual. They play the latest music. And they've got Yuka Nukina. Daisuki! (Another swift Japanese lesson: 'suki' means 'I like it'; 'daisuki' means 'I like it a lot'; and 'kirai' means 'I hate it'.)

Yuka's programme is called *Macintosh Non-Stop Power Play*. If it's any help, the programme's jingle is along the lines of 'From the World to Tokyo on 81.3...' Yuka's voice is like liquid gold. It was love at first word. What she says doesn't matter – it's the way she says it.

81.3 FM is the channel that wakes most Tokyo-ites (a word you'll find under 'termite' in your dictionary) in the morning. And a very large percentage of the music they play is foreign, as opposed to domestic.

There are a handful of other radio stations, but their karmic impact level is much lower. It does not help that reception is poor for them either. FM-Yokohama is pleasant, but suffers from interference from the intervening hills.

***Famicom Tsushin* – a huge-selling weekly(!) multi-format games mag – it regularly features Japanese pop idols.**



Pools of custard

Next, television. The choice of music on television is a little more limited, unless one has either cable or satellite. If you do, you should be pitied, as you get MTV. On the up side, though, there are classical music concerts on the NHK Education Channel, and there's late night music on TVK. But that's not all! It's time to mention the 'K' word...

Karaoke. (There goes my career!) Or, in the case of television, 'terekara'. The format of terekara shows varies. Typically, two contestants sing along to the backing track and are judged on their performance. The winner gets some prizes and the chance to come back at some unspecified date in the future. The loser is dropped into a pool of boiling custard. This doesn't mean, however, that diminutive old ladies in kimonos sing cover versions of Bruce Springsteen. That would be too easy. Instead, they have to sing 'enka' – popular Japanese love songs.

There are lots of different kinds of terekara shows, all different yet, at the same time, all identical. The best thing about these shows is that they subtitle all the songs. The worst thing is that they use lots of kanji. (Kanji are Chinese characters, which written Japanese is full of, and which are a lot harder to read than the simpler, phonetic katakana symbols they use for writing Western-sounding words.)

The music's cute too!

So that's where the stuff comes from. But what's it like? Leaving out imported music, which accounts for a large percentage of listening here, the bulk of Japanese listening can be broadly described as 'J-pop' – Japanese pop. So far we've been lucky – there are no popular Japanese rap artists. But there's plenty that – to Western ears at least – sounds just as weird:

- Punk lives on in Japan, and Jun Sky Walkers are living proof of this. They seem to be missing the point though – they sound like a... well, like a punk group always used to. It's dated, while in its heyday punk was at the cutting edge.

Far left: The Shibuya district of Tokyo. Left: Cuteness sells – FM-Towns regularly use the Queen Of Cute, Arisa Mizuki, in their ads.

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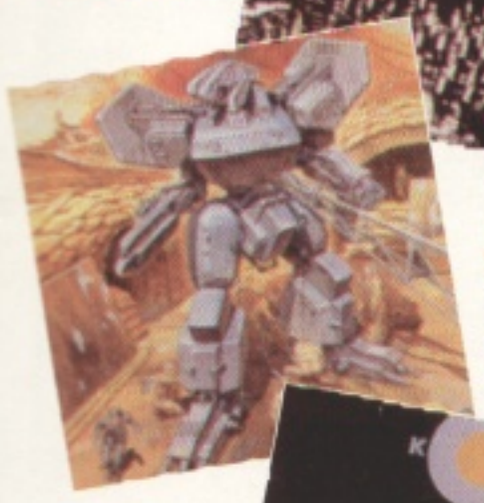
The Shibuya of Tokyo. teness sells – ns regularly Queen Of te, Arisa Mizuki, in their ads.

Game music CDs

We'll start with an easy one – the music CD to (yes!) *Street Fighter II...*

...Falcon Neo Classics From Studios In London City(!)...



...but here's last month's cover game, *Valken...*

...rarities from a popular game music composer (we think)...

...and here's one you'll have heard of – driving game *F-Zero...*

...here's another popular one, the theme to top blaster *Axelay...*

...the best of *Pop'n Twinbee*, based on the spaceship with fists...

...and finally a *Dragon Slayer* one. (This is a 'JDK Special', apparently...)

● Idol singers. In essence, these are cute girls who sing cute songs. With most of them it wouldn't matter if they just stood there and looked cute – they'd still sell records. It does help, however, if they're 'exceptionally' cute, or can sing, but not much. The records still sell loads. The group Mi-ke for example, consists of three girls who sing cover versions of anything going. But only one of them actually sings.

● Goddesses (Of Cute). These are the cute ones who last a bit longer, and are just that little bit different. Many are film starlets. And Arisa Mizuki is The Overcute – the Queen Of Cute. If you find an FM-Towns II advert, that's her in it.

● Famous names. There are quite a few of these. Here are just a few to whet your appetite: Chage and Aska, two men who proye that J-Pop is not restricted to women; Chisato Moritaka, who likes shiny clothes and wears the-miniskirt-that-would-not-die – best described as glam-rock; Yumi Matsutoya (Yuming), who is very good and very popular with 18 albums so far, the latest of which, *Tears And Reasons*, is selling well. Adverts on television always have a little title informing the watcher who the music is by. Yuming, for example, does Kirin lager music.

● Enka, Japanese popular love songs. If you don't understand Japanese you'll miss on the detail of these, but they're incredibly funny all the same! Women, and sometimes men, sing with warbly voices to music that sounds like it's being produced by a couple of people twanging things in the kitchen. It can also be done with large orchestras playing in the same style, viz: 'Bop, twang, bip-bop, twang...'

The music of the games

Finally we come to the undeniably relevant subject of game music. It's hugely popular as everyday listening in Japan, and there's an awful lot of it. Some being so well disguised that it could be passed off as the real thing. (Music that is.) Here are a few ideas to threaten your wallet with:

● *Falcom Neo Classics From Studios In London City*. A double disc. Ever wondered what the theme *Wanderers from Ys* or *The Legend of Heroes* would sound like if it was played by an orchestra? Well now you can find out. Disc 2 contains the Logic System Versions, which are quite entertaining. Most notable is track 10, *The Morning Grow*, which conjures up images of the lawn doing wondrous things. Now if only I had a lawn... (*We're not quite sure what he's on about either – Ed.*)

● *Dracula New Classics*. This is a pleasant 45 minutes of orchestrally-arranged music. Or is it? Are those real musicians or just cleverly programmed computers? Who knows. Who really cares? It's great either way.

● *Namco Game Sound Express Vol 6*. An uninspiring title maybe, but if you're a fan of *Star Blade* or *Galaxian 3: Project Dragoon*, then you'll like this. It's cheap (1,500¥ – about £7.50), with two dialogue tracks explaining the plot. Wakarimasen! (I don't understand!) But it has the *Star Blade* 'happy ending', so I'm happy. *Star Blade* is of the few arcade games I'm good at, and the end titles are worth the struggle.

● *Dragon Slayer – The Legend of Heroes*. From Falcon. Who would have imagined that an RPG could become an action-packed anime film? Not having seen the game, I can't really tell you how faithful the result is. But there's plenty of action, some real baddies, the odd comic moment and the promise of more violence in part two. Incidentally, I met the man who did the character design for it, Ken Ishikawa. He works for Go Nagal and makes the most incredible models! (The soundtracks for this, and the films that follow, are actually popular listening material, which is why I mention them.)

● *Kuro no Shishi – The Black Ninja*. Puerile American animation fans beware – the characters in this anime are fully capable of massacring anything they ever come across. There are shades of *Terminator* in here, too – one of them is mostly machine. It's definitely not destined for Saturday morning TV, though, not being nearly violent or bloodthirsty enough. Fans of Go Nagal will like it.

● *Ranma 1/2 The Movie*. Those of you that like the games of the same name will like this. It's utterly cute, and utterly hilarious. *Ranma 1/2* was one of the big Summer movies in Japan, and it shows. There are Niki-nikis everywhere! (They're rather like bikinis, only, erm, even sexier.) It's thoroughly cute family entertainment, basically, and even better if you can understand Japanese, as there are plenty of good jokes in the dialogue.

Next month: Further insights into the wacky world of Japanese culture from Peter Evans.

They might *look* like the lot on the other page, but no! They're the CC Girls, one of Japan's most popular groups.

ONLY IN JAPAN

We're quite big on all things Japanese here at *Super Play* (as you might have guessed), especially when they're as cute as these...

A CUDDLY TOY FOR EVERY OCCASION...

We thought we'd take a different, slightly more visual, tack with Only In Japan... this month. Everyone likes cuddly toys (right?), but nowhere can you get such a vast range of the things as in Japan, where they really do have a soft, padded animal (or person, or, erm, car) for every occasion...

Can it be...? Yes, it's a squidgy Scott, Brains, FAB 1, Thunderbird 2 and Mole! F.A.B.!

You just haven't seen cute until you've seen a stuffed Ultraman and family.

The *Dragonball Z* characters haven't escaped being depicted in felt and cotton either.

Nor have Mario, Luigi, Yoshi and co.

(That's enough stuffed toys – Ed.)

THE NEWIE FROM CAPCOM WE'LL NEVER SEE!

The Dragon Knight: Breath Of Fire (Capcom)

An action-packed fight scene from *Breath Of Fire*.

A racoon with a turban on, yesterday.

Any new game from Capcom just *has* to be worth looking at, even when it's the sort of RPG that's unlikely to get translated into English for a UK or American release. (Indeed, Capcom Vice President Joe Morici says as much in our interview on page 28.) This one is currently causing quite a stir in Japan, where expectations run high – many people are expecting the quality to be comparable to *Street Fighter II*. The big difference between this and any similar games is that the *Breath Of Fire* creators have spent a lot of effort on the isometric 3D fight scenes – one Japanese magazine has described them as 'looking so real, it's like two plastic models battling it out,' whatever that may mean. Your party consists of eight characters – including a girl with wings, a man-wolf, a snake-woman and a cute racoon-type character with massive claws. Apparently, two characters can combine their powers when the situation really demands it.

One of your eight characters – (we think it's a satyr).

As yet it's unclear quite how much the preponderance of Japanese text will make the game impossible for Westerners to play (though we suspect that it will be the case), but we'll still bring you more news on the game as we get it. Certainly, expect to see *Breath Of Fire* sitting high in the Japanese charts soon, and consider – if Japanese-style RPGs are ever to catch on in the English-speaking world, wouldn't such a graphically-rich one as this be the ideal starting point?

This bit may explain why *Breath Of Fire* got its name.

BEST OF PUCK!

USA Ice Hockey (Jaleco)

It doesn't look like *NHLPA Hockey* – EA's ice hockey game – will have it all its own way for long. Not only is there Taito's *Hit The Ice* (due any day) about to take a pop at it, Jaleco are about to throw their tuppenny worth in too. *USA Ice Hockey* includes all the teams, options and statistics you'd expect, and presentation (scrolling up-and-down like *Kick Off*) almost identical to the EA game. Look for a Japanese release this month, and a review next issue.

Red are on for a score in USA Ice Hockey.

SECOND TIME LUCKY?

F1 Grand Prix Part 2 (Video System)

We've mentioned *F1 Grand Prix Part Two* a couple of times in the past, but we've never actually shown you it. Well, now here it is – the latest in a long line of games hoping to take the still-vacant Super NES definitive-Formula-1-driving-game slot. The game persists with the same overhead view as its predecessor (indeed, at casual glance they're all but indistinguishable), which means it's saddled with that old can't-see-what-corners-are-coming-up problem that's bugged most games of this type. This, however, hasn't done anything to diminish its appeal – it's riding high in the Japanese charts at present. We'll have more details – including the all-important is-it-any-good? – with the review next issue.

THE SECRETS OF NINTENDO'S SUCCESS REVEALED! (WELL, SORT OF)

Remember how Nintendo are the third most profitable non-financial company in Japan, behind Toyota and Nippon Telegraph & Telephone? Well, Nintendo's story is this – 'despite low consumer spending in Japan,' Nintendo's Yoshihiro Mori says, 'Nintendo fans are willing to buy our software, even as they cut back on other things. The unit price of our products is relatively cheap, and even in a recession, parents still buy their kids game software.' No doubt British Nintendo players would reply that at least someone gets software 'relatively cheap'!

NEW TECH

BY JONATHAN DAVIES

Now you can play NES games on your Super Nintendo, thanks to the Superdeck from Hornby

BACK TO BASICS

Or rather, 'Old Tech', as this column should perhaps be called. Basically, what Hornby have come up with here is an adaptor that lets you play 8-bit NES games on your SNES. It does a bit more than that, of course. It's got a flashy front end that lets you tart up the colours and sound on 8-bit games. It'll handle up to four carts at once, which you can choose between, from a menu. And it's got special 'safety features' which will prevent you from plugging in carts the wrong way round. But that's basically what it is – an 8-bit to 16-bit convertor. It comes out in June, and it'll cost between £30 and £35.

But this all begs the question: why would anyone want to play nobby NES games on their Super Nintendo? Well, Hornby have conveniently come up with a list of reasons, most of which do seem to hold water.

1) Although they might look and sound inferior to their Super NES counterparts (it says here), NES games are generally just as much fun to play. You don't want to chuck your old NES collection when you buy a SNES, now, do you?

2) There are lots of NES games that simply don't have equivalents on the SNES – classics like *Super Mario Bros 1, 2* and *3*, the original *Castlevania* games, the *Mega Man* games, *New Zealand Story*, *Rainbow Islands*, etc.

3) NES games can be bought for as little as £20.

So how are Nintendo going to feel about all this? (This is, of course, a totally independent product, just as Game Genie was, with no official backing.) After all, the arrival of the Superdeck might be enough to kill off the ailing NES market altogether – why buy one when you could have a SNES *and* a Superdeck for not much more? We suspect that if the idea did appeal to Nintendo, they'd have done it themselves, so we asked them. 'No comment,' said Bandai, Nintendo's UK distributor, surprisingly enough, though this isn't the last we expect to hear from them on the subject.

Don't worry – this is an early prototype Superdeck. The real thing will look nothing like this.

BIG BANG THEORY!

Super Bomberman (Hudson Soft)

Ever since the release of the Super Multitap five-player adaptor (see last issue), we've been waiting for the arrival of the Super Nintendo version of *Bomberman* with bated breath. The reasons why will hopefully become clear in a minute. For those of you who *don't* know the basic game from one of its earlier incarnations, here's a quick run-down.

Bomberman first appeared on the Famicom (NES) in 1985, and has since crept onto PC Engine, Game Boy, Amiga and other systems, sometimes under the alternative name, *Dynablaster*. The rules are simple: you play a tiny 'bomberman', who runs around these maze-like, baddy-filled screens. You set your bomb, then quickly run around a corner, getting out of the way before the short fuse goes off, and the bomb explodes, clearing some blocks out of the way, and hopefully either taking out an enemy or revealing a hidden power-up. These power-ups can either increase the number of bombs you can carry and use at any one time, or the power of their explosions; while 'bad' blocks, can, if walked over, slow you down, make it so you can't control the release of your bombs, or muck up things for you in several other ways.

Boom! A hefty explosion at the top there (right).

New graphics and baddies won't be familiar to Amiga version players.

Four players and two bombs right in the middle – *very* tricky.

Near the start of a four-player game, everyone looking for power-ups.

Best of all though is that the game has two modes – the 'normal' mode, where you simply have to clear the screen, and (yay!) the multi-player battle game, allowing up to four to play simultaneously (not quite as many as the five you had on PC Engine and Amiga, but good enough), hiding around corners and trying to blast the other players out of the way. Of course, to do this you'll need a Super Multitap, but it's well worth it, let us tell you!

Bomberman is currently completed, and due for a Japanese release soon. We'll be reviewing it soon, so keep your eyes open!.

ANIME WORLD

WHY ANIME, EXACTLY?

To Western eyes – where only Disney can get away with feature length animation – the Japanese fascination with cartoons seems a bit, well, *strange*. Why are they so into them? What's the advantage? Helen McCarthy explains...

Someone asked me the other day why film-makers bother with animation, especially for science fiction and fantasy movies. After all, given the state of SFX today there's very little that can't be done in live-action, and don't people identify more readily with real actors than with drawings? That got me thinking, and, as often happens with me, thinking led to daydreaming and...

... We've only just started shooting on my epic trash-sf novel, *Gunner Nuns In Outer Space*, and already it's all going horribly wrong. Arnie, whom the studio has insisted I have for the male lead because he can guarantee bums on seats, has a problem with the script – he doesn't like the scene where Sigourney socks him on the jaw and knocks him out cold after a 10 minute slugfest in the mudbaths of planet Tralll, and is demanding a rewrite, so that he wins and gets to go off to the tavern with the cute, green-haired 18-year-old identical twins. They should have been 13-year-old identical twins, but we can't have anything too risque because we have to get a 15 certificate to stand a chance on the cinema circuit.

Meanwhile Sigourney doesn't want to wear the kneelength, flamecoloured wig, and feels that having paid her dues as an actress she shouldn't have to peel her top off for a mudwrestling scene. Tom, the romantic hero, won't wear the full make-up for the scene where the Mother Superior's curse transforms him into a half-man, half-pig. His cute little nose will only be its true self for 10 minutes of screen time.

The SFX unit are screaming blue murder about the spacebattle where 37 small truckships involved in the Galactic Truckers' Race suddenly decide to peel off and join Sigourney and Arnie in their little one-on-one fighters, taking on the might of the Mother Superior and her killer legion of crack androgyne pilots in sleek Starhawks. The design for the Starhawk has already been modified three times from the novel description to bring it in line with budget. It gets less sleek every time.

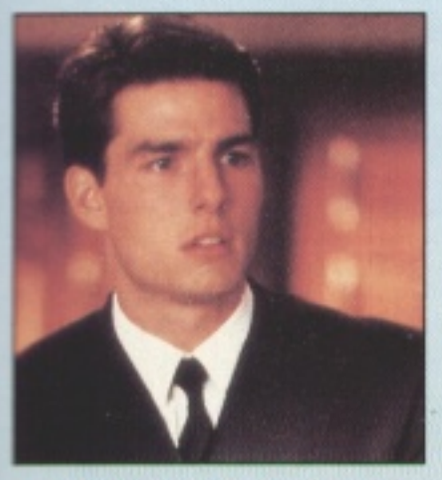
The guys playing the alien legion can only work 20 minutes at a time in the suits and prosthetics, and the second unit shooting their big fight scene is already going over-schedule and over-budget, plus the men in suits (who really control every movie made in Hollywood, whatever directors might like to pretend) are getting worried about possible heatstroke and accident claims. We can't shoot on location because of the budget, so the desert fight is being done on a set on the studio lot, and I think it'll show...

Finally, the producer has just come in to tell me that we're all about to be preached against on prime time TV by a leading evangelist, shunned by the Amish and excommunicated by the Catholic church for our negative portrayal of religious women. Negative? The Mother Superior is a beautiful queen bitch with a heart of ice and a mean hand with a bullwhip – what's negative about that?

It's almost a relief to come back to earth and realise I've got nothing worse to cope with than this week's bills.

Contrast this with the life of the anime film-maker. No matter how fantastic his setting, or how complex his scenario, the cost involved is only the

We're massive, massive fans of *Porco Rosso* here at *Super Play*, so Helen only had to mention his name once for us to run off and gather up all our old *Porco* pictures to present to you here. Enjoy! Left: This guy might look like the hero of the piece but no – he's actually a cad and a bounder, not unlike the character actor Terry Thomas played in all his films. Right: Now *that's* a hero.



Tom Cruise costs $10 million(ish) a film. What a stupid amount of money.

Sigourney insists on having control over the script, while Arnie will eat you out of house and home.

Animate your film instead, argues Helen McCarthy, and you save yourself all of these problems!

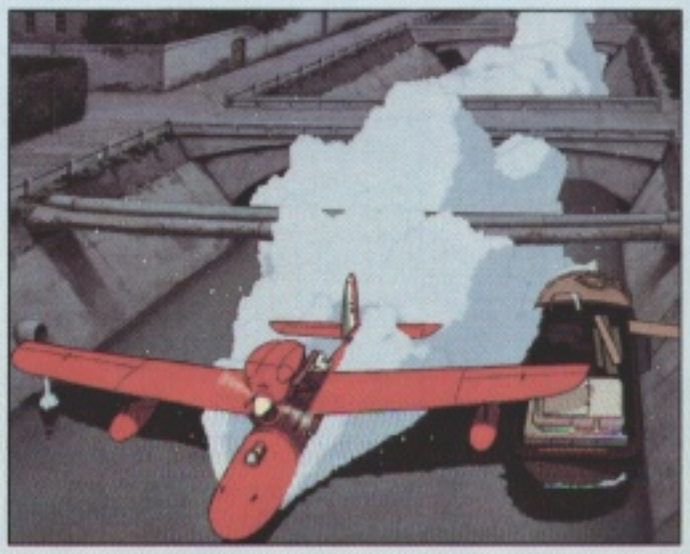
number of cels required. His actors never complain about scripts, costumes, sets, stunts, or fight scenes. Every one of his characters will look exactly as he wants them to look, say what he wants them to say, and do stunts, fight scenes and overtime without a quibble. He can even kill off a lead character in the first reel if he likes.

Look at Miyazaki Hayao's latest release, *Porco Rosso*: the male lead is a dream of a role in the old romantic mould, a heroic fighter ace of the '20s – who just happens to look like a pig. Marco is the perfect leading man, but how many live actors would be willing to play an entire movie behind a mask? Heroine Fio is a 17-year-old with a passion for aircraft who spends much of her time in a flying suit that makes her look like an exceedingly cute overstuffed red tyre, and wears never a scrap of make-up – can you see Winona in the role?

The anime director's aliens can be as weird as he can imagine and his artists can draw. In *The Guyver*, an original animation video (OAV) where buckets of gore and sexual violence abound, the Guyver of the title is the eight feet of spiky, muscled death into which the young hero transforms on contact with a strange device. Massive, mean and impressive doesn't even begin to describe it! In the American live-action 'version', released here as *Mutenoids*, the Guyver is a man in a rubber suit and Mark Hamill ends up as a sort of monster version of Lewis Carroll's caterpillar and looks, like everyone else in this sorry mess of a production, completely and utterly absurd.

In anime, battles can be as gory, sex scenes as sexy and his horror as schlocky as the director likes. If the film he wants to make is too esoteric or too erotic, too bloody or too banal to make a mainstream cinema release or TV slot, he can still put it out on video for a much smaller audience, so ratings and certificates needn't worry him unduly. This is often done with OAVs like *Joker*, in which the lead character switches sex at will, or *Supernatural Beast City*, where demon abuse, half-insect transformations and black magic battles are central to the story.

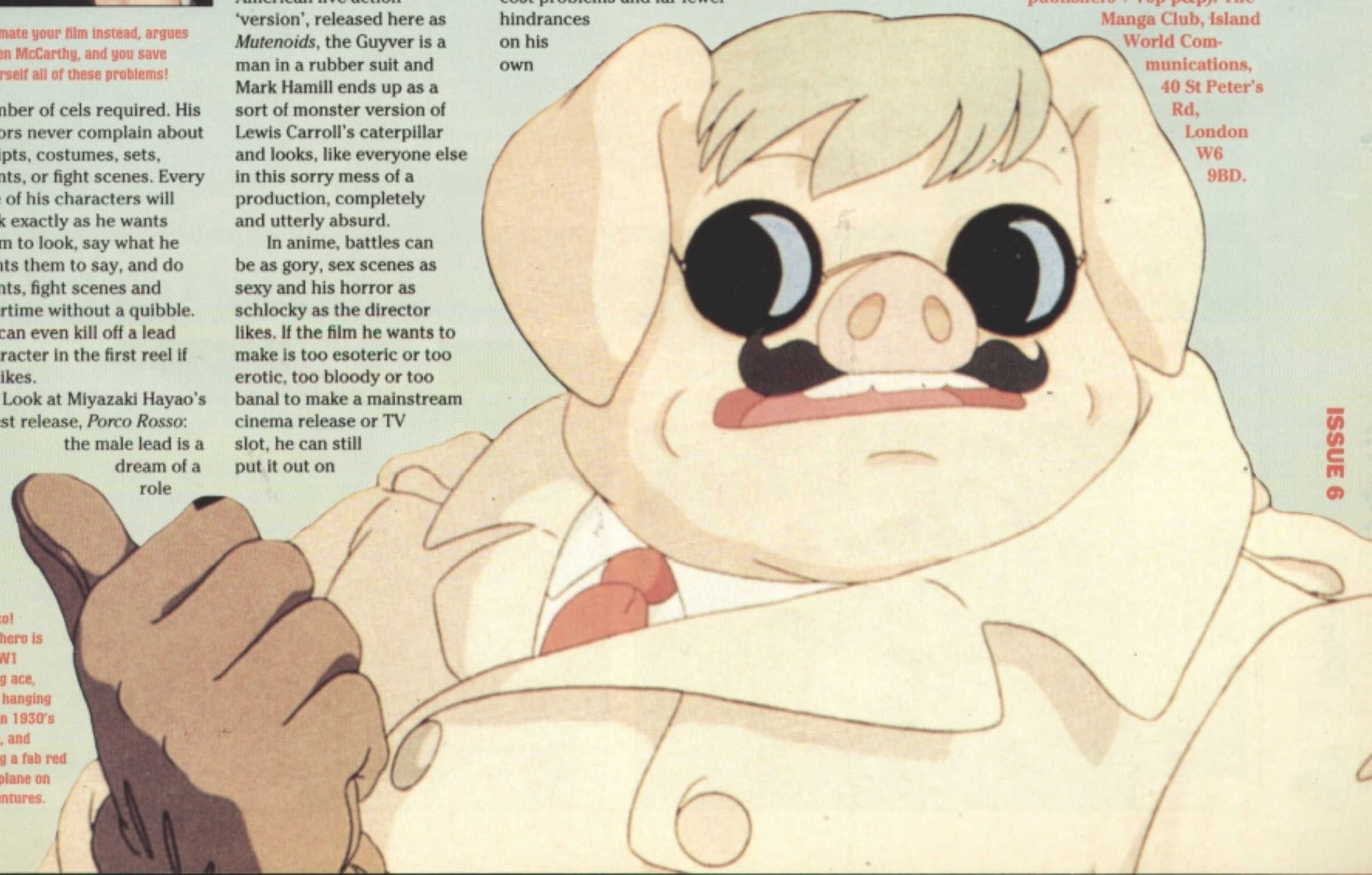
Compared to his Hollywood counterpart, the anime director has massive creative freedom. With fewer cost problems and far fewer hindrances on his own imagination, he can make the film he *really* wants to make. And that's why film-makers bother with animation. Is it any wonder?



A selection of stills from the *Porco Rosso* films. How much would it cost to buy a genuine seaplane for a live action film, let alone recreate '30s Italy? And how much would the actors be? You can avoid all that if you draw everything.

ANIME CONTACT

***Anime UK* magazine, 70 Mortimer St, London W1, (£3.50 from SF/comic shops, or mail order from the publishers + 70p p&p). The Manga Club, Island World Communications, 40 St Peter's Rd, London W6 9BD.**



It's Porco! Our hero is a WW1 flying ace, now hanging out in 1930's Italy, and flying a fab red sea plane on adventures.

GAME WORLD IS GO!

VIDEO GAME TV SHOWS FIVE NIGHTS A WEEK

Video game TV shows seem to be cropping up every few days now, especially on Satellite TV. Sky One, for instance, has just launched its *Games World* series, which is on five nights a week in the 6.00-6.30pm slot. *Games World* consists of five different shows, one each day of the week. Here's the listing:

MONDAY

This is *The Eliminator*, a gameshow where 'five contestants are whittled down through a number of knockout rounds to leave one champion.' The guy who wins this appears on Friday, too.

TUESDAY

Tuesday is *House Of Games* night, a show similar to *Juke Box Jury*, where new games are reviewed by a panel of experts, celebrities and gameplayers. Presenters are Jane Goldman – game journalist and wife of Jonathan Ross – and Neil West, Editor of *Mega* magazine. Neil says: 'It's going to be great! We'll have all sorts of people on, and I'm going to be dressed up like Gomez out of *The Addams Family*.'(!)

Future's very own Neil West!

WEDNESDAY

This one's another gameshow, *Try Your Luck*, which seems to have a phone-in element – one part of it offers 'the tantalising Fundress, a card game where viewers take on a computer character – and the losers lose more than their shirts!'

THURSDAY

This is the one Jason's been waiting for – it's *The Peep Parlour*, a tips section hosted by the Gamesmistress, played by Diane Youdale (Jet from *Gladiators*!). She is partnered by 'cartoon peepshow hostess' Madam Pixel.

FRIDAY

They've saved the 'best' for last, all right. Friday's show is *Beat The Elite*, where the player who won *The Eliminator* at the start of the week returns to pit his skills against a group of 'Videators' – gameplayers who dress like a sort of cross between the Gladiators, WWF wrestlers and Ryu, Blanka, etc, from *Street Fighter II*. (Just check out the pics below!)

Now we're not promising any of these shows will be brilliant (except for Neil West's one, hem hem), but they *have* been put together by Hewland International, the people behind *GamesMaster* (the show), so they should know what they're talking about. And they're bound to be a good laugh!

The Super NES modem: two-player games, inter-city style!

Ever wanted to play a two-player game with your pal, but can't because you both live in separate towns? Well, happily it doesn't look like this'll be a problem for long, thanks to a company called Baton Technologies, who've come up with console-specific modems for sale in the US. The system is called Teleplay, and though it hasn't been released yet, Baton have high hopes for it – both the Mega Drive and NES versions are scheduled for release this year, with Super Nintendo later. Special games are being developed to take full advantage of the fact that you're playing the game against each other, using different monitors in different rooms. (Sadly, however, quite what these special games will be like hasn't yet been made clear.)

STUCK ON SKüLJ

If you were American and happened to be stuck on the (admittedly average-ish) platform game Sküljagger, you might just be tempted to ring America's free 24-hour Sküljagger hotline! It sounds simple: you ring up, and Captain Sküljagger, villain of the game, tells you how to complete it. The problem is, he doesn't seem capable of stringing a sentence together without bellowing insults down the line at you (sample: 'you miserable puss-brained imbecile, you spineless pantywaist' etc), mixed in with the occasional hint. American kids must love being insulted, because the line's apparently incredibly popular!

CAN YOU STAND THE MIGHT OF THE

(Are you sure you're ready for this?) *Beat The Elite*'s 'Videators' include:

The gang's all here! The Videators: lookin' the way they like, and likin' the way they look!

THE GAMES MESSIAH
Thinks he's Jesus.

BIG BOY BARRY
Fat and arrogant.

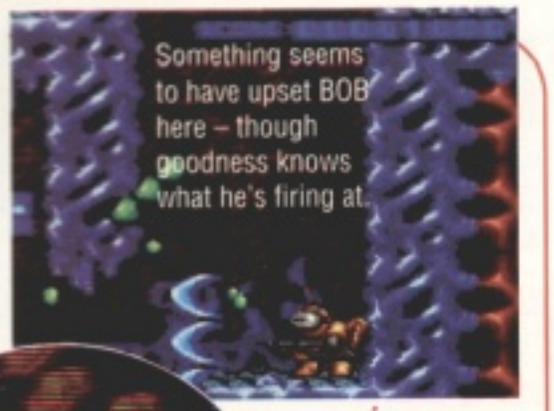
THE EXECUTIONER
PitFighter, jnr?

MASTER MORIART
A public school kid

A 'P' please, Bob!

BOB

(Electronic Arts)


Something seems to have upset BOB here – though goodness knows what he's firing at.

It seems that, these days, everyone's got to have their own little character to front their games. Nintendo's got Mario, Accolade's got Bubsy, JVC's got, er, Luke Skywalker... er... UBI Soft's got Jimmy Connors... (*I'd start getting to the point if I were you – Ed.*) And now Electronic Arts has got BOB!

BOB – is that *really* a likely name for a robot?

He's a robot, and, while on his way to a hot date, he crashes his spaceship and finds himself stranded. Inevitably, perhaps, the key to his escape lies in successfully negotiating a series of platform-filled levels, dodging baddies and collecting extra bits and 'bobs'. (Hey – we made a funny!) There are three worlds altogether, each with between 10 and 13 levels.

If all goes well, *BOB* should be in the shops at the beginning of May 1993.

SKüLJ AGGER?

His Nastiness himself, the evil villain Sküljagger. He certainly hasn't got a very pleasant telephone manner!

THE VIDEATORS?

MASTER MORIART
A public school kid

LOVELY LETTIE EDWARDS
'The granny who's game', apparently.

THE NINJA
A rock hard kung fu character.

SUPER PLAY'S HOT LIST

There are plenty of great games reviewed in this issue of *Super Play*, but we'd hate you to overlook the following older titles...

ASSAULT SUITS VALKEN

(NCS Musiya)

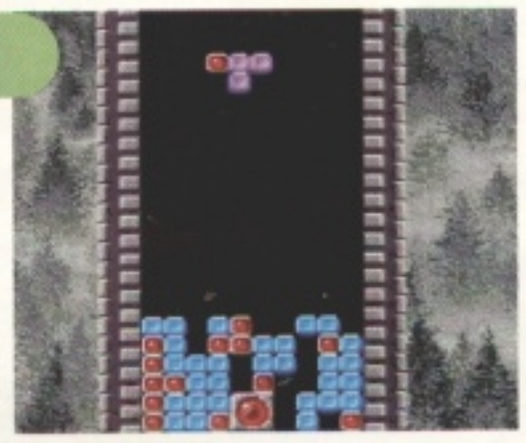
Games with robots in are surprisingly thin on the ground, considering how popular that kind of stuff is in Japan. But *Valken* more than makes up for the shortfall, with fabulous graphics and sound, a great robotic feel and lots to attack with your assault suit's potent weaponry.

TINY TOONS

(Konami)

Playing *Tiny Toons* is exactly like watching an interactive cartoon, and a really good cartoon at that. The animation and sound effects are spot on, there's lots of variety from level to level, there are loads of good jokes and the difficulty level is just about right. What more could you ask for from a game?

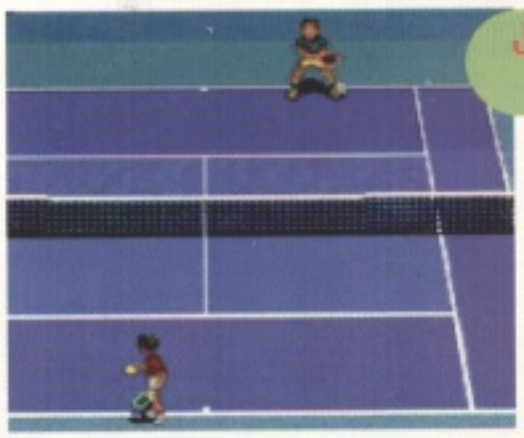
TETRIS 2 + BOMBLISS



(Bullet-Proof Software)

You've got Sue, *Super Play*'s Production Editor, to thank for this one's inclusion. She's done little else this month except play *Tetris*, while occasionally shouting at people to work harder, and it's been driving us bonkers. Still, this is as good a version of *Tetris* as any, and we suggest you go out and buy it.

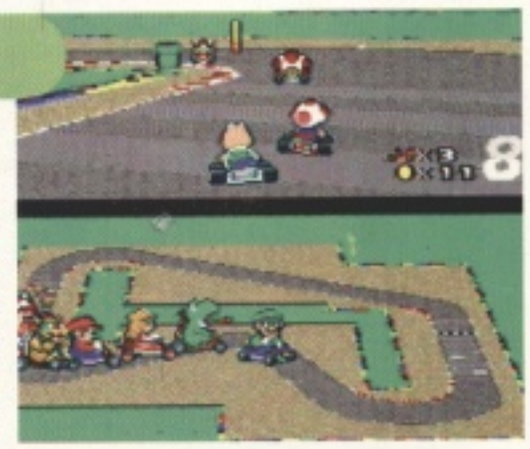
JIMMY CONNORS' PRO TENNIS TOUR



(Ubi Soft)

Until we see evidence to the contrary, we're prepared to believe that *any* game that lets four people play at once is bound to be a winner. Even if you haven't got three friends (or a four-player adaptor), this is a great tennis game which, in many ways, is *nearly* as good as *Super Tennis*.

SUPER MARIO KART



(Nintendo)

After taking a brief holiday from the Hot List for the last couple of months, it's back. *Super Mario Kart* fever is gripping the *Super Play* office once again, assisted by those great adverts on the telly, and we've been able to think about little else. It may sound like we're labouring the point, but we think it's just about perfect.

GOLDEN BEE AWARDS

THE RESULTS!

It's the *Super Play* readers' verdict on the games, the personalities, the peripherals and the events of 1992.

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the Royal Festival Hall, er, Bath, for the presentation of the *Super Play* Golden Bee Awards of 1993. Whether you took part in the competition, and filled in the coupon in issue 3, or not, you're probably dying to know who the winners and losers are. Well, take a seat, and wait for the lights to dim and a hush to descend upon the star-studded audience...

Remember, folks, we asked you to vote based on the games and peripherals released in 1992. And that meant either on import *or* on official UK release (so older games like *Super Mario World* qualified because the UK market only actually saw them for the first time last year). In each category we've picked a winner and two runners up, based on the percentage of the votes you cast.

BEST SNES GAME OF THE YEAR

Chun Li up to her old tricks in *Street Fighter II*.

STREET FIGHTER II

Runners-up: **SUPER MARIO KART, SUPER MARIO WORLD, THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST, SUPER PROBOTECTOR**

No, no, let's try and guess. Er... *Nolan Ryan's Baseball? Romance of the Three Kingdoms II?* As if. Predictable? You lot? Maybe, but it's gratifying when our three highest-rated games ever in *Super Play* agree with yours.

BEST SNES SPORTS GAME

This is one of our favourites, too. In fact, it's one of the best tennis games on *any* system.

SUPER TENNIS

Runners-up: **SUPER SOCCER, JOHN MADDEN '93**

As one of the first five Super Nintendo games to be made available in this country, *Super Tennis* seems to have built up a strong following. Not surprising – all of us at *Super Play* would have voted for it, any day. Much the same goes for *Super Soccer*, another one of 'The Five'.

BEST SNES BEAT-'EM-UP

Chun Li and Dhalsim fight to the death in, guess what? I don't think we have to spell it out!

STREET FIGHTER II

Runners-up: **FINAL FIGHT, TURTLES IV**

Huh. You lot. You're so predictable. A whopping 97% of you voted for *Street Fighter II*, with *Final Fight*, *Turtles* and *Super Double Dragon* – the only other beat-'em-ups to even merit a mention – squabbling over the remaining 3%. A bit of a foregone conclusion this one. (Don't miss our player's guide for *Street Fighter II* on page 48.)

BEST SNES SIMULATION

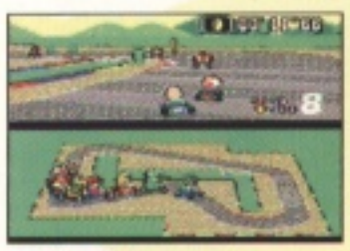
Successfully holding the fort until other good simulation games appear on the SNES.

PILOTWINGS

Runners-up: **SIM CITY, F1 EXHAUST HEAT**

The problem here, perhaps, is that simulations are pretty thin on the ground as far as the Super Nintendo is concerned. There's only really *Pilotwings* (and *Sim City*, maybe) – but there're so good we don't really need any others.

BEST SNES DRIVING GAME



It'd be getting boring if we were to again say that *Mario Kart* is our fave too, but it just is...

SUPER MARIO KART

Runners-up: **F-ZERO, TOP GEAR**

Hurrah! That's all we can say to that. In fact, if you hadn't put *Super Mario Kart* firmly at the top of this category, we'd probably have fiddled it so it was. (Or been sorely tempted to, anyway.) *F-Zero* and *Top Gear* are worthy runners up, but *Mario Kart* seems to have completely captured the hearts of the nation – and nearly three quarters of the vote.

WORST SNES GAME OF THE YEAR

It doesn't look like the game will be as successful as the film!

HOME ALONE

Runners-up: **PITFIGHTER, WHEEL OF FORTUNE**

The list of nominations for this category made pretty sorry reading, with many people clearly bitter about ill-judged game purchases. The top three (which we won't glorify by mentioning again) were way clear of the rest. How many of you have *really* played *Wheel Of Fortune*..?

BEST SNES STRATEGY GAME

Power at your fingertips, you can build and destroy a city at will with the touch of a button.

SIM CITY

Runners-up: **POPULOUS, SUPER RAMPART**

The precise meaning of the word 'strategy' seemed to have escaped many of our readers, with everything from *WWF Wrestlemania* to *Super Probotector* making a showing. *Sim City* shone through, however – a verdict we'd heartily endorse.

BEST SNES PLATFORM GAME

Colourful graphics, and an involved and enjoyable game, spell 'deserved success'.

SUPER MARIO WORLD

Runners-up: **CASTLEVANIA IV, PRINCE OF PERSIA**

We didn't even bother counting the votes for this category. Well, all right then, we did. But it was kind a foregone conclusion. *Super Mario World* swept the board, with nearly 85% of the vote. Not surprising, perhaps, as it'll be the only platform game many people know. (And, of course, it's a brilliant game.) However, a hardened core of *Castlevania* fans made sure their voices were heard.

MOST ORIGINAL SNES GAME

How else would a fat Italian plumber get such fame?

SUPER MARIO WORLD

Runners-up: **PILOTWINGS, LEMMINGS**

Er... While *Super Mario World*'s certainly got lots of original bits in, we wonder whether it's really all that mould-breaking. Still, you're calling the shots. *Pilotwings* – now there's an original game. And *Lemmings* too – If you ignore its previous appearances on countless other machines.

BEST SNES LICENSED GAME

Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader confront each other in the fab *Super Star Wars*.

SUPER STAR WARS

Runners-up: **THE ADDAMS FAMILY, BART'S NIGHTMARE**

Well, there we have it. Those three 'best licensed games' in full. And we wouldn't argue with your choices. *Super Star Wars* is a smashing game, as are *The Addams Family* and *Bart's Nightmare*. It just goes to show, really.

BEST SNES ROLE PLAYING/ADVENTURE GAME

Zelda's been kidnapped, and poor old Link has to try and rescue her – again!

LEGEND OF ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST

Runners-up: **LEGEND OF THE MYSTICAL NINJA, ACTRAISER**

While *Legend Of The Mystical Ninja* isn't actually available in this country yet, it seems enough of you have played the import version to propel the game to within spitting distance of the top slot – except that *Zelda* got 25 times more votes!

FAVOURITE UK SOFTWARE PUBLISHER

Britain's favourite software publisher.

OCEAN

Runners-up: **ELITE, GREMLIN**

True, Ocean put out far more games than anyone else in this country. But they seem to be games people really like. And their growing importance in the US and Japan may well see them featuring in the International Publisher category next year.

BEST SNES PUZZLE GAME

Original, ingenious and addictive, as we've described it in What Cart?

LEMMINGS

Runners-up: **KRUSTY'S SUPER FUN HOUSE, PUSHOVER**

There are lots of great puzzle games on the Super Nintendo, but it seems that *Lemmings* is your favourite by a long way – nearly two-thirds of you nominated it. *Krusty's Super Fun House* and *Pushover* are the worthy runners-up.

FAVOURITE UK SOFTWARE DEVELOPER

Developers of *Robocop 3* and *Lethal Weapon*, amongst countless other games.

OCEAN

Runners-up: **BITMAP BROS, GREMLIN GRAPHICS**

After their success above, anything other than another victory for Ocean here would be perverse. 'I really have to claim all the credit,' explained Ocean's Ken Lockley, while being escorted from the stage by a pair of uniformed security officers. The Bitmap Bros? Well, a lot of that can probably be put down to their success on other machines, but *Gods* shows they can do it on the SNES, too.

BEST SNES PERIPHERAL

A very handy little gadget this, and popular with you lot.

PRO ACTION REPLAY

Runners-up: **ADAPTORS (VARIOUS), CAPCOM JOYSTICK**

There aren't all that many peripherals for the SNES. But the Action Replay seems to be number one. All kinds of adaptors picked up votes, which we've lumped together to put adaptors generally onto the shortlist. And the Capcom joystick did well too, presumably because of 'that game'.

BEST THING TO HAPPEN TO THE SNES MARKET IN 1992

E Honda tries his hundred hand slap on Dhalsim, who's looking a bit damaged.

STREET FIGHTER II

Runners-up: **SNES BEING LAUNCHED IN THE UK, SUPER PLAY**

Yawn. But we have to admit it: *Street Fighter II* has probably done more for the Super Nintendo than every other game put together. There were sufficient literalists among you to make sure the Super Nintendo's UK launch got its due. And a big 'thanks very much' to everyone who voted for *Super Play*.

BEST SNES GRAPHICS

Electrifying graphics, certainly, but the best on the SNES? *We* think there are better.

STREET FIGHTER II

Runners-up: **AXELAY, MICKEY'S MAGICAL QUEST**

Really? Has *Street Fighter II really* got the best graphics on the Super Nintendo? Or have you just got into the habit of writing '*Street Fighter II*' every time you see a dotted line? *Axelay* and *Mickey's Magical Quest* we'd agree with, however.

WORST THING TO HAPPEN TO THE SNES MARKET IN 1992

The one thing everyone seems to agree with – games are *much* too expensive.

THE PRICE OF GAMES

Runners-up: **SMALL NUMBER OF GAMES AVAILABLE, SUPER SCOPE**

There were a huge number of nominations for this category, ranging from the Sega CD ROM, through a variety of poor games, to a selection of 'other' SNES magazines. Those two old bug bears, the price of games and the limited selection of games available, came head and shoulders above the rest, though, with a number of dispirited Super Scope owners making their feelings known .

BEST SNES SOUND

If you can make it out from the gloom, this is a pic of *Super Castlevania*, honest!

SUPER CASTLEVANIA IV

Runners-up: **STREET FIGHTER II, SUPER PROBOTECTOR**

Jason Brookes, *Super Play*'s in-house sound 'n' music expert, nodded sagely as he examined the results of this section. He loves listening to *Castlevania* and *Probotector*. And then he spotted *Street Fighter II*. 'What? The sheep! The sheep!' *SFII has* got great sound, but even so...

GAME WE'RE MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO NEXT YEAR

Star Wars: the movie fans love this game, as it follows the plot brilliantly.

SUPER STAR WARS

Runners-up: **SUPER MARIO BROS V, DESERT STRIKE**

Of course, 'next year' now means 'this year', so the sense of anticipation is all the stronger. Those eagerly awaiting *Super Star Wars* and *Desert Strike* should have their desires fulfilled very shortly, but *Mario*-watchers may have a longer wait – perhaps even until the release of the CD ROM late this year/early next year.

FAVOURITE INTERNATIONAL SOFTWARE PUBLISHER

Producers of the most successful game yet on the SNES.

CAPCOM

Runners-up: **KONAMI, NINTENDO**

We've a pretty good idea which games you had in mind when casting your votes here. Capcom have produced loads of good titles (*Mickey's Magical Quest, Final Fight, UN Squadron*), but *Street Fighter II* has made their name as far as the Super Nintendo's concerned.

FAVOURITE INTERNATIONAL SOFTWARE DEVELOPER

Top quality games from a top quality games developer.

CAPCOM

Runners-up: **NINTENDO, KONAMI**

Basically a re-jig of the International Publisher category, demonstrating that the most respected games publishers seem to be those with good in-house development teams.

TILL THE SAME TIME NEXT YEAR, THEN

Well, ladies and gentlemen, that concludes the *Super Play* Golden Bee Awards for 1992. We would like to congratulate the winners and indeed, runners up, and commend them on their performance. We hope you have had a pleasant evening, and we'll see you next year.

THE WINNERS!

As you may remember, we offered Game Genies, courtesy of Hornby, to the 10 readers who, in the editor's opinion, most closely predicted what the top five games in the 'Best SNES Game of the Year' category would be. The following 10 people will consequently be receiving a Game Genie in the post pretty soon: Ben Little of London (the only person to get all five games in the right order), Roger Pimlolt of Blackpool, Kieran McNully of Shannon, Ireland, Paul Clark of Aberdeen, D Smith of Folkestone, Daniel Nix of Audley, Keith Perry of Milton Keynes, Paul Wright of Farringdon, Stephen Roddis of Sheffield and Gareth Jenkins of Bridgend. Well done!

POP'N TWIN BEE

(Konami)

Pop'n Twin Bee: cute, blocky, bright.

We've shown you something of this one before, but when we saw this artwork for the game it was just enough to push us over the edge and we simply *had* to do something else on it. This is a decidedly suburban shoot-'em-up, with levels taking place over a housing estate, a harbour and a large city (as well as more exotic locations like the Great Wall Of China – or similar – admittedly). The game's got a simultaneous two-player mode and cute graphics. We'll have our review soon.

Neat harbour has ships etc.

Aliens take on attack formations familiar from various classic coin-ops.

DATEBOOK

More SNES releases than you've seen since, well, last month's Datebook.

Don't be put off by the fact that this bit of the page looks really boring. It's actually incredibly interesting, detailing, as it does, every single game coming out on the Super Nintendo everywhere in the world over the next couple of months. Wow! So read it...

MONTH	DATE	GAME TITLE	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER	COUNTRY
Mar	5	F1 Exhaust Heat 2	driving	Seta	Jap
Mar	5	Monopoly	board game	Sunsoft	Jap
Mar	12	Edonokira	RPG	Micro World	Jap
Mar	12	Super Kick Boxing	sports	Electro Brain	Jap
Mar	12	2020 Baseball	sports	G Amusements	Jap
Mar	12	Ogre Battle	strategy	Quest	Jap
Mar	12	California Games II	sports	Hect	Jap
Mar	12	Super Famistar 2	sports	Namcot	Jap
Mar	19	Nigel Mansell F1 Championship	driving	Infocom	Jap
Mar	19	Super Battletank	simulation	Pack-In Video	Jap
Mar	19	Jungle Wars 2	RPG	Pony Cannon	Jap
Mar	mid	Super Dunk Star	sports	Sammy	Jap
Mar	25	Super Wolf And White Deer	strategy	Koei	Jap
Mar	26	Pop'n Twin Bee	shoot-'em-up	Konami	Jap
Mar	26	International Tennis Tour	sports	Micro World	Jap
Mar	26	Yoshi's Cookie	puzzle	Nintendo	Jap
Mar	26	Desert Strike	shoot-'em-up	EA Japan	Jap
Mar	late	Bio Metal	shoot-'em-up	Athena	Jap
Mar	late	Fortress Of Fury	action	Jaleco	Jap
Mar	–	Super Wagan Land 2	RPG	Namcot	Jap
Mar	–	Debustitar	action	Micro World	Jap
Mar	–	Super Air Diver	action	Asmik	Jap
Mar	–	Wayne's World	action	THQ	US
Mar	–	EVO	simulation	Enix	US
Mar	–	Super Conflict	wargame	Vic Tokai	US
Mar	–	Inindo	RPG	Koei	US
Mar	–	Football Fury	sports	Sammy	US
Mar	–	Albert Odyssey	RPG	Sunsoft	Jap
Mar	–	Powermonger	strategy	Imagineer	Jap
Mar	–	Dead Dance	beat-'em-up	Jaleco	Jap
Mar	–	Tohaiden	–	Video System	Jap
Mar	–	The Blues Brothers	action	Kemco	Jap
Mar	–	USA Ice Hockey	sports	Jaleco	Jap
Mar	–	Metal Max 2	strategy	Data East	Jap
Mar	–	Devil's Course	sports	T&E Soft	Jap
Mar	–	Jo Jo's Big Adventure	action	Cobra Team	Jap
Mar	–	The Devil's Psychology Game	puzzle	Veicot	Jap
Mar	–	Noigia – Sea and Wind	strategy	Wolf Team	Jap
Mar	–	Powermonger	strategy	Imagineer	Jap
Mar	–	Dorapochan	sports	Naxat	Jap
Mar	–	Tsupari Sumo	sports	Tecmo	Jap
Mar	–	Dragonball Z	RPG	Bandai	Jap
Mar	–	Silver Saga 2	RPG	Seta	Jap

***F1 Exhaust Heat 2* (Seta): fast.**

***Fortress Of Fury* (Jaleco): furious.**

***Super Famistar 2* (Namcot): fab.**

Mar	–	Great Battle III	strategy	Banpresto	Jap
Mar	–	Ultra Seven	beat-'em-up	Bandai	Jap
Mar	–	John Madden '93	sports	Electronic Arts	UK
Mar	–	Super Star Wars	action	JVC	UK
Mar	–	Tiny Toons	platform	Konami	UK
Mar	–	Alien vs Predator	action	Activision	UK
Mar	–	Cycle Grand Prix	racing	Hudson Soft	UK
Mar	–	Gods	platform	Mindscape	UK
Mar	–	The Irem Skins Game	sports	Hudson Soft	UK
Mar	–	Nigel Mansell F1 Championship	driving	Gremlin	UK
Mar	–	Terminator 2	shoot-'em-up	Acclaim	UK
Mar	–	Super Parodius	shoot-'em-up	Konami	UK
Mar	–	Mickey's Magical Quest	platform game	Capcom	UK
Mar	–	Best Of The Best	beat-'em-up	Nintendo	UK
April	16	Dual Orb	RPG	Imax	Jap
April	–	Septentrion	action	Human	Jap
April	–	Elnard	RPG	Game Plan 21	Jap
April	–	First Samurai	platform	Kemco	Jap
April	–	Holy Sword Legend 2	RPG	Square Soft	Jap
April	–	Bubsy	platform	Accolade	US
April	–	Shadowrun	RPG	Data East	US
April	–	Suzuki F1	driving	Nintendo	UK
April	–	The Blues Brothers	platform	Nintendo	UK
April	–	Chessmaster	strategy	Mindscape	UK
April	–	King Arthur's World	puzzle	Jaleco	UK
April	–	Magic Sword	beat-'em-up	Capcom	UK
April	–	Pebble Beach Golf	sports	Nintendo	UK
April	–	Super Double Dragon	beat-'em-up	Nintendo	UK
April	–	Super Pang	action	Capcom	UK
April	–	Super Star Wars	action	JVC	UK
April	–	World League Basketball	sports	Nintendo	UK
April	–	Wing Commander	shoot-'em-up	Mindscape	UK

We've done our best to make sure all this information is as accurate as possible, but release schedules are constantly getting rejigged by publishers. It's a dog's life...

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CHART THROB

THE TOP TENS THAT BITE BACK!

Chart beat. Cross your chart and hope to die. Charts'd be a fine thing. Just some of the many titles we rejected before arriving at 'Chart Throb'. Doesn't look quite so bad now, does it?

OFFICIAL PENGUIN GALLUP UK CHART

▲ UP ▼ DOWN ▶ NON MOVER ★ NEW ENTRY

Compiled for *Super Play* by Gallup

1 ▶ **SUPER MARIO KART** Nintendo
Mario Kart, Mario Kart, rah rah rah! It's still riding high! 93%

2 ▲ **BART'S NIGHTMARE** Acclaim
Don't have a cow, man! Um... and other Bart Simpson-type things. 91%

3 ▲ **PILOTWINGS** Nintendo
Earn yourself some wings, and become a pilot! (*Guess what? Yep, you're sacked. – Ed.*) 92%

4 ▲ **ZELDA – A LINK TO THE PAST** Nintendo
Heading straight back up the charts again, after a brief dip. 93%

5 ▲ **SUPER GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS** Nintendo
Top platforming action. Watch out for the ghouls and the ghosts! 85%

6 ★ **SPIDERMAN & THE X-MEN** Acclaim
Spidey uses his incredible climbing abilities to clamber up to number six. 72%

7 ▼ **SUPER MARIO WORLD** Nintendo
It's been talked about so much that it's very tricky to think of anything new to say. 94%

8 ▼ **SUPER SOCCER** Nintendo
It's this or *Kick Off*, really – and *Super Soccer* seems to be winning by a mile. 83%

9 ▲ **SUPER PROBOTECTOR** Konami
We're not quite sure what a Probotector is – but he's pretty damned tough! 90%

10 ▼ **SUPER WWF WRESTLEMANIA** LJN
Unconvincing wrestling game that, chart-wise at least, seems to have peaked. 74%

No change in the top slot – *Super Mario Kart*'s firmly rooted.

The only new entry in the UK chart is *Spiderman*.

And *Street Fighter II* is conspicuous by its absence.

UK IMPORT CHART

Compiled for *Super Play* by Console Concepts

1 **ASSAULT SUITS VALKEN** NCS Masiya (JAP)
2 **FATAL FURY** Takara (Jap)
3 **SUPER STAR WARS** JVC (JAP)
4 **TINY TOONS** Konami (JAP)
5 **JAKI CRUSH PINBALL** Naxat (JAP)
6 **CAVEMAN NINJA 2** Data East (JAP)
7 **MICKEY'S MAGICAL QUEST** Capcom (JAP/US)
8 **DESERT STRIKE** Electronic Arts (US)
9 **JOHN MADDEN '93** Electronic Arts (US)
10 **OUT OF THIS WORLD** Interplay (US)

Assault Suits Valken: A brilliant shoot-'em-up.

Jaki Crush: A bit on the slow side, but fun to play.

Needless to say, *Assault Suits Valken* has swooped into the top slot with all its guns blazing (see our in-depth review last issue) – no messing about. *Fatal Fury*'s doing very well, too, thanks no doubt to its reputation as being 'a bit like *Street Fighter II*'. And *Super Star Wars* has slipped down from the top position. Otherwise the UK import chart looks broadly similar to last month's – hardly surprising, given that no really major games have been released in the month since then. We must admit to being a little surprised to see *Caveman Ninja 2* doing so well, though.

JAPANESE CHART

Compiled for *Super Play* by Tai Ono

1 **FINAL FANTASY V** Square Soft
2 **GODDESS REINCARNATION** Atlus
3 **STREET FIGHTER II** Capcom
4 **DRAGON QUEST V** Enix
5 **SUPER MARIO KART** Nintendo
6 **WIZARDRY V** Ascii
7 **SANGOKUSHI III** Koei
8 **HERO BATTLE RECORD** Banpresto
9 **THE LEGEND OF ZELDA** Nintendo
10 **FINAL FANTASY IV** Square Soft

Final Fantasy V: Still in the number one slot.

Zelda: Back in the charts again for some reason.

Apart from old faves *Super Mario Kart* and *Street Fighter II* (which, along with *Zelda*, we would've thought were a bit past their sell-by dates in Japan by now), the Japanese chart seems jam-packed full of RPGs. We've covered *Dragon Quest V* in detail in *Super Play*, but the *Final Fantasy* games are almost as popular – the success of *Final Fantasy V* having dragged its prequel back into the chart. The surprising thing is that even a major action release like *Assault Suits Valken* – so popular here – can't scrape an entry, which only goes to show how tight the RPG thing has got the Nipponese market sewn up at present.

AMERICAN CHART

Compiled for *Super Play* by Woody Carter

1 **STREET FIGHTER II** Capcom
2 **SUPER MARIO KART** Nintendo
3 **MARIO PAINT** Nintendo
4 **JOHN MADDEN '93** Electronic Arts
5 **BULLS VS BLAZERS** Electronic Arts
6 **NHLPA HOCKEY** Electronic Arts
7 **SUPER STAR WARS** JVC
8 **MICKEY'S MAGICAL QUEST** Capcom
9 **FF: MYSTIC QUEST** Square Soft
10 **DEATH VALLEY RALLY** Sunsoft

Mario Paint: Why this is featured is beyond us.

Bulls vs Blazers: One of EA's three top sports games.

The American chart looks about the same as it ever does – lots of Electronic Arts sports games, which the Americans seem to be so keen on, jumbled up with *Street Fighter II* and *Super Mario Kart*. Tch. It's interesting to see just how popular *Mario Paint* seems to be proving over there. Those zany Americans obviously haven't had the benefit of being able to read *Super Play*'s in-depth review (see page 70). They also seem to have developed a strange fascination with *Death Valley Rally* – which we rated at just 42% in issue 4. Maybe there's something we missed!

SUPER PLAY Interview

JOE MORICI, Capcom USA

By Jason Brookes

Above: *'Street Fighter II* is now generally considered to be the fastest selling video game in history.' Joe Morici waxes lyrical about Capcom's biggest game ever.

ANOTHER CHAT WITH ONE OF THE PEOPLE WHO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF SUPER NES GAMES

Joe Morici is a Senior Vice President at Capcom USA, based in Santa Clara, California. As one of the most prominent publishers and developers of Nintendo games over recent years, Capcom has a reputation for quality. It also has a huge research and development team. Their arcade division has been at the leading edge of coin-op video game development for years, and has created many landmark games – including the most successful arcade game ever, *Street Fighter II*. This, along with top-selling SNES games like *UN Squadron* and *Mickey's Magical Quest*, has given Capcom a massive profile in the industry. Recently, Capcom was voted the best international software publisher and developer by the readers of *Super Play* in the first Golden Bee Awards (see page 24).

Top: *Final Fight II*, rumoured to be brilliant, with a simultaneous two-player mode, sadly missing from the first version. Above: *Goof Troop* – Goofy and son Max take on a bunch of pirates in this cute *Gauntlet*-esque romp.

Q Okay, Joe – here's an easy one to start off with. How many people do Capcom employ in Japan and the States?

A We've got over 100 employees here in America, and nearly 500 over in Japan.

Q Does that mean most of your development is done in Japan? Indeed, do your guys in America create *any* of the games?

A No, all Capcom's development takes place in Japan. Of those 500, over 350 are programmers or graphic artists, working on all sorts of projects. It's because we've got such a big and experienced creative team that I think we're able to produce so many games of such extremely high quality – your readers will know all about things like *Street Fighter II* and *The Magical Quest* starring Mickey Mouse. Though 350 sounds like a lot of developers – and *is* a lot compared to most companies – we actually need more. At some point we hope to set up a separate development team in the US, and perhaps one day in Europe too.

Q We all know it's been a massive, massive hit, but just *how* successful has *Street Fighter II* been for Capcom?

A Well, what can I say? *Very* successful. *Street Fighter II* is now generally considered to be the fastest-selling video game in history. I'll give you a few figures to illustrate what I mean. In Japan it was released for the Super Famicom in early June 1992, and sold over 1,000,000 units in less than a month. Since then, the Japanese market has seen a further 3,000,000 units sold. Here in the US, the game was released about a month later and we've sold 1,500,000 units so far. We expect to sell a further 2,000,000 *Street Fighter II* carts in 1993. On top of that, there are the figures for the UK, Europe and the rest of the world. It's taken off everywhere.

Q A question we are constantly asked is, of course, will Capcom be releasing *Street Fighter II: Champion Edition* for Super Nintendo? If not, how about the new Turbo version?

A We don't have any plans as yet to release either version of the game on *any* home platform.

Q Okay, can you tell us anything about the other games Capcom are currently developing?

A As it happens, we've just announced a new product line-up. *Final Fight II* is scheduled for an Autumn release this year in the US. *Goof Troop* is our second Disney licence for the SNES, and is a two-player top-view adventure/action game with collaborative gameplay. It's based on a new Goofy TV show. That's due in September. *Super Mega Man*, *Masters Of Monsters* and *Aladdin* are all new titles that're in the early stages of development. However, we have no plans to release our forthcoming Japanese RPG *Breath Of Fire* in the US – that sort of game isn't very popular over here. (*See Super Express for more details of all of these games – Ed.*)

Q What are you doing about the rip-off *Street Fighter II* arcade boards that keep appearing in arcades around the world?

A There are a lot of them about, aren't there? We hear about new ones everyday, and we're obviously worried and annoyed by them all. To try and give them a good run for their money, we've been working closely with officials from the Amusement and Machine Operator's Association (AMOA) and the FBI to pursue counterfeiters aggressively.

Q Finally, what CD ROM plans do Capcom have? Will anything from you be amongst the first Nintendo CD releases?

A Capcom will wait before entering the CD ROM market – we're not going to jump in there what we feel to be prematurely. We're currently evaluating the industry to see which systems come out on top. When the time is right, however, we'll certainly be there to provide strong support for whichever ones are successful. Don't expect to see CD stuff from us this year, though, or maybe even next. Don't hold your breath, basically.

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JUST JOIN THE CLUB, ANSWER 3 EASY QUESTIONS PRINTED BELOW AND IN NOT MORE THAN 12 WORDS COMPLETE THE TIE BREAK SENTENCE.

Q1. WHAT IS THE NAME OF MARIO'S BROTHER?

Q2. WHAT IS THE NAME OF THE GIRL IN STREET FIGHTER II?

Q3. WHAT DOES SNES STAND FOR?

TIE BREAKER

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THE BIGGEST GAME OF '93

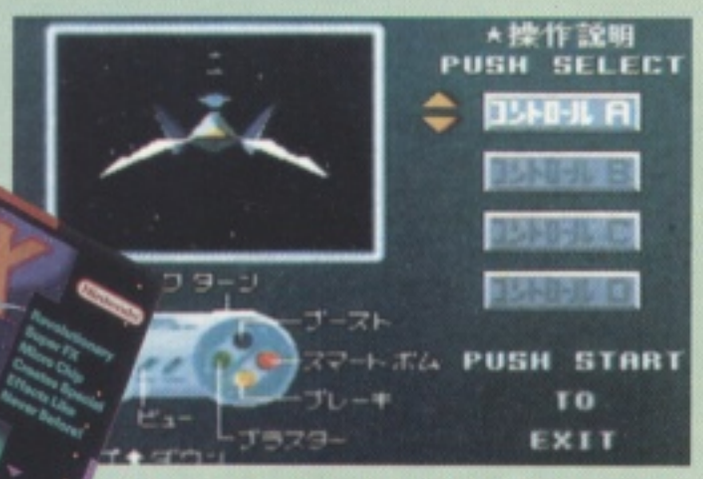
STARFOX
Starfox is the first game to use Nintendo's celebrated Super F/X advanced graphics chip, and by far the biggest release of the first half of the year. So, we thought it worth taking a good long pre-release look at the game and its significance.

The *Starfox* crew, staring, Dan Dare-like, into space. From left to right: Slippy Toad, Peppy Hair, Falco Ranvaldi and Fox McCloud. You'd certainly trust your planet's safety to this lot, wouldn't you? (*Well... – Ed.*)

There are two reasons why *Starfox* looks set to be the most talked-about game of 1993. The first is that's it's being published by Nintendo themselves, and a new release from them is *always* a major event. The second is that it's the first game to use the new Super F/X chip.

Now, we explained exactly what the Super F/X chip is in issue 4, so we're not going to go through it all again. (*Aw, go on – The Readers.*) Well... all right. But only quickly, mind.

Okay, you've only got to look at a game like *Race Drivin'* to see that, as it stands, the Super Nintendo simply can't manage fast, detailed 3D filled-polygon graphics of the sort seen in Amiga and PC games like *Knights Of The Sky*, *Formula One Grand Prix* or *Car And Driver*. It *can* do wonderful things with Mode 7, it *can* fill the screen with massive, fast-moving sprites, and it *can* splash loads of colours around, but it simply hasn't got the processor speed to cope with the complicated maths that 3D polygons involve. Enter the Super F/X chip which, when included in a cart, solves the problem at a stroke.



You want selection and control screens? You got 'em. *Starfox* comes with tons of nifty front end stuff.

So what have Nintendo done with all these polygons? They've turned them into an epic space shoot-'em-up, that's what. And Mario's nowhere to be seen. Instead, we've got a whole new set of heros – Fox McCloud and his chums – and they're on the trail of a mad scientist, Andolf, who's taken over the planet Venom and declared war on the peaceful neighbouring planet, Cornelia. You – playing the Starfox crew, of course – are based on Cornelia, and can take one of three routes to Venom, using your advanced Arwin fighters. There are three or four stages to each route, and they take the form of flying-through-space bits, flying-over-planet-surface bits and flying-down-tunnel bits. On the flying-over-planet-surface bits, it is possible to shoot down some of the buildings, though you'll have to watch out for the falling masonry if you do so. (Obviously, getting crushed by a collapsing skyscraper is not good for your health.) Various power-ups and extra energy supplies are available as you go too, but one thing you can't replace are your wings, which can be shot off by enemy fire. Don't worry – you can still fly without them, but you no longer have the benefit of their energy-bolt absorbing properties, which could cause problems. (While you have them, your wings halve the force of enemy hits, so losing them is obviously a Bad Thing). As you might expect, you meet Boss characters at the end of every level – the first one is an Attack Spacecraft Carrier-thing, and others tend to be similar large, polygon-formed mechanical monstrosities.

Here's a quick run-through of the first stages, to give you some idea of how it all works:

LEVEL ONE, STAGE ONE: CORNELIA – THE BASE

This happens over Cornelia's surface. Avoid the buildings (or, alternatively, shoot them out of your way), try and get through a series of five gates cleanly to collect a power-up, then you face the giant Attack Spacecraft Carrier.

The game starts with some of its best graphics – the buildings move towards you very smoothly. While you do have *some* control over how high you fly, you're forced into a narrow corridor of movement, like *Afterburner* et al.

Above: Your home planet, in this level one intro. Fox McCloud puts his penny's worth in from the right.

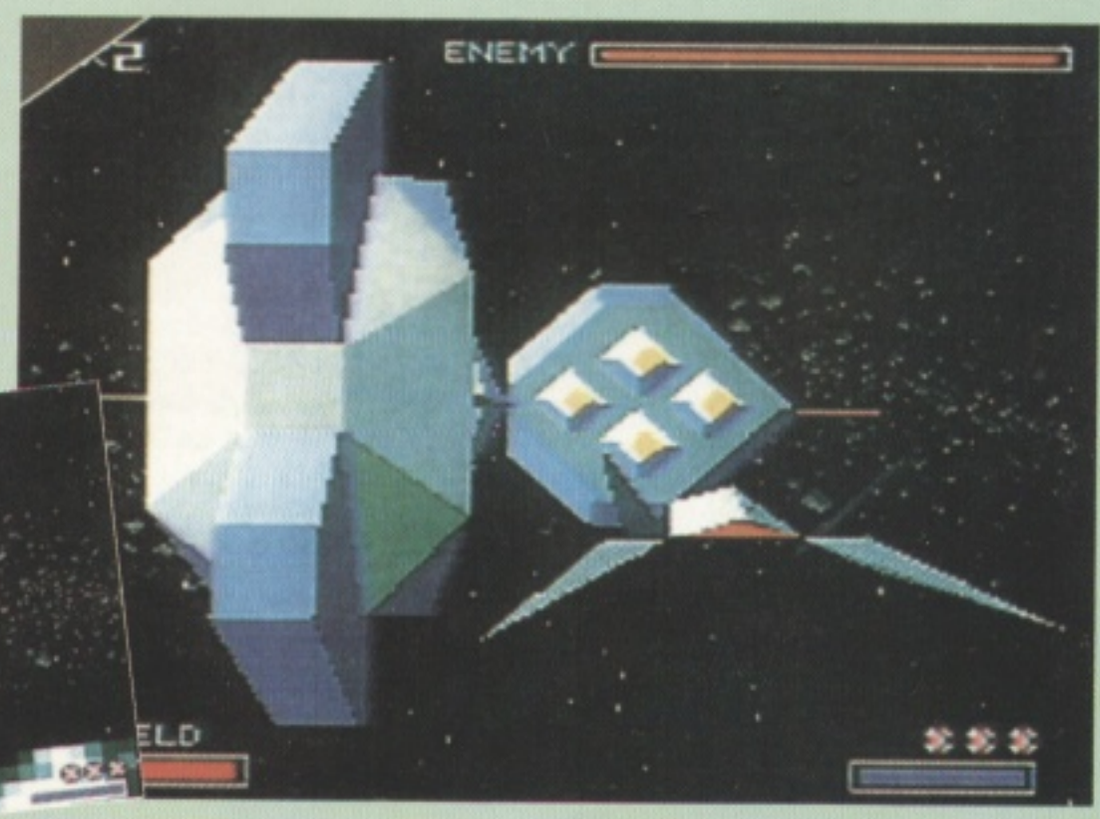
Above and right: A couple of in-game pics from level one, as you fly over the surface. Watch out for the buildings!

LEVEL ONE, STAGE TWO: THE ASTEROID BELT

This one's an asteroid belt, with the floating rocks causing obstructions to both you and your enemies. You can blow up the red asteroids (but not the grey ones) you come across with your guns, while the Boss character is an Asteroid Sweeper, complete with eight giant offensive cannons. On this stage you get an additional viewpoint to use – one where it seems as if you're actually sitting inside your spacecraft's cockpit itself (complete with middle-of-the-screen gunsights), not flying along just behind your craft, as was the case earlier in the game.

Above: The intro screen to the Asteroid belt level, showing – yes! – a bunch of asteroids, and the Cornelian commander who tells you exactly what it is you've got to do.

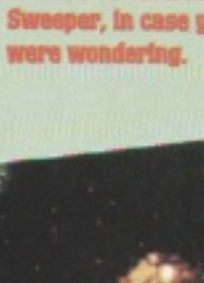
Right and below: Dodging between the asteroids and manoeuvring yourself around giant spaceships in level two's spectacular chase through space. The large object on the right is the end-of-level Asteroid Sweeper, in case you were wondering.



Far right: Here's a whole bunch of asteroids, with your gun sights targetted on the red one in the middle, dead centre. (Happily, this is one of the ones you can blow up, so you're doing all right so far.)
Right: Though you do come across spectacular big 3D things fairly often, this is a more typical screen – a couple of spaceships and an explosion.

WHO IS STARFOX?

Despite physical evidence to the contrary, Starfox isn't actually a person at all, but the name of a whole team. You see, it was only after they'd created the advanced Arwin fighter that the forgetful Cornelians realised they didn't actually have anyone to fly it. Hence the quick hiring of a team of ace fighter pilots to do their dirty work – the renowned Starfox Rapid Deployment Force. Though the Starfox heroes are very close buddies – they've been to hell and back together – and would trust each other with their lives, each has his own, very different background story. (And yes, we're going to share them with you.)



Fox McCloud
Age: 25
Weight: 47kg
Height: 152cm
Species: Fox

The Starfox leader is the son of a great fighter pilot, and was expelled from the Galactic Military School Of Flying for trying to investigate the cover-up of his father's death. Very moral and intense (a bit like Elliot Ness), he picks and chooses the jobs the Starfox crew will take on – he won't let them handle anything he feels to be politically dodgy. Tends to rely on his instincts and go with hunches a bit more than is wise, and (the devil!) is rumoured to have a bit of a soft spot for the ladies.

Peppy Hare
Age: 34
Weight: 54kg
Height: 143cm
Species: Rabbit

An old friend of Fox's father, Peppy is cool and calculating, spending much of his time getting Fox out of the trouble he keeps landing the team in. He's the one the rest of the gang look up to, especially for a sense of fair play – he referees any brawls they get into, etc. His fifth sense is highly developed.

Slippy Toad
Age: 19
Weight: 46kg
Height: 113cm
Species: Frog

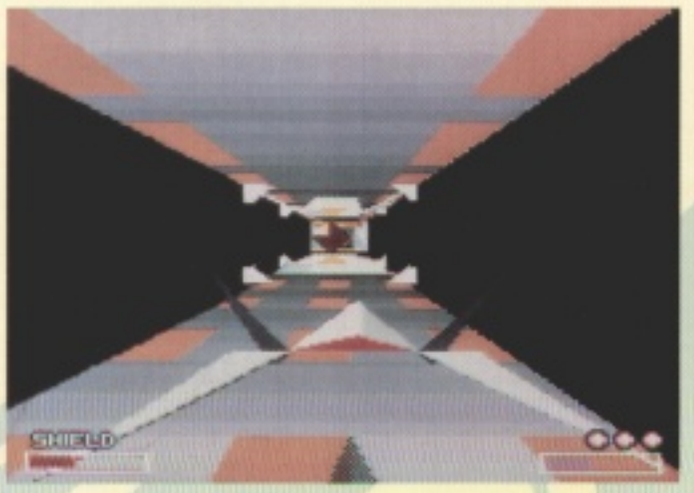
Another ex-Galactic Military School Of Flying pupil, he looks up to Fox as his role model. He's always getting into trouble, but his brilliance as a spaceship mechanic more than makes up for this. A cheerful character, and the least aggressive member of the team.

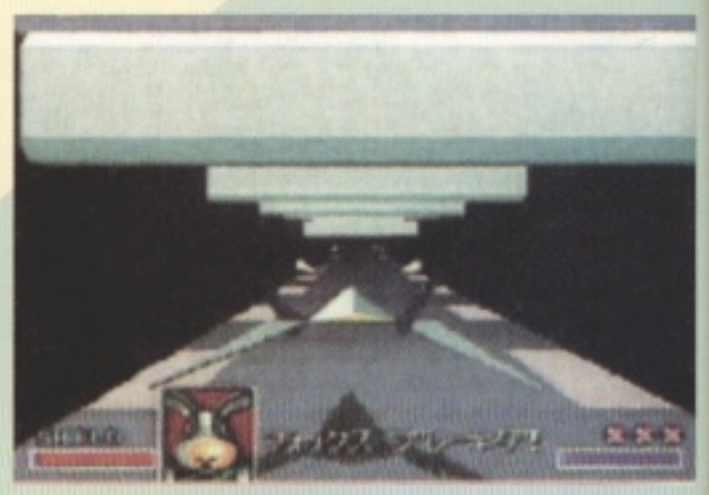
Falco Ranvaldi
Age: 28
Weight: 51kg
Height: 175cm
Species: Hawk

Falco's one of the more hardened, aggressive Starfox team members. He's been Fox's rival at times in the past, and his pilot skills are rumoured to be even better than his. For him, winning is everything – pride is his main motivating factor. This is the guy you'd really want as your wingman, given the choice.

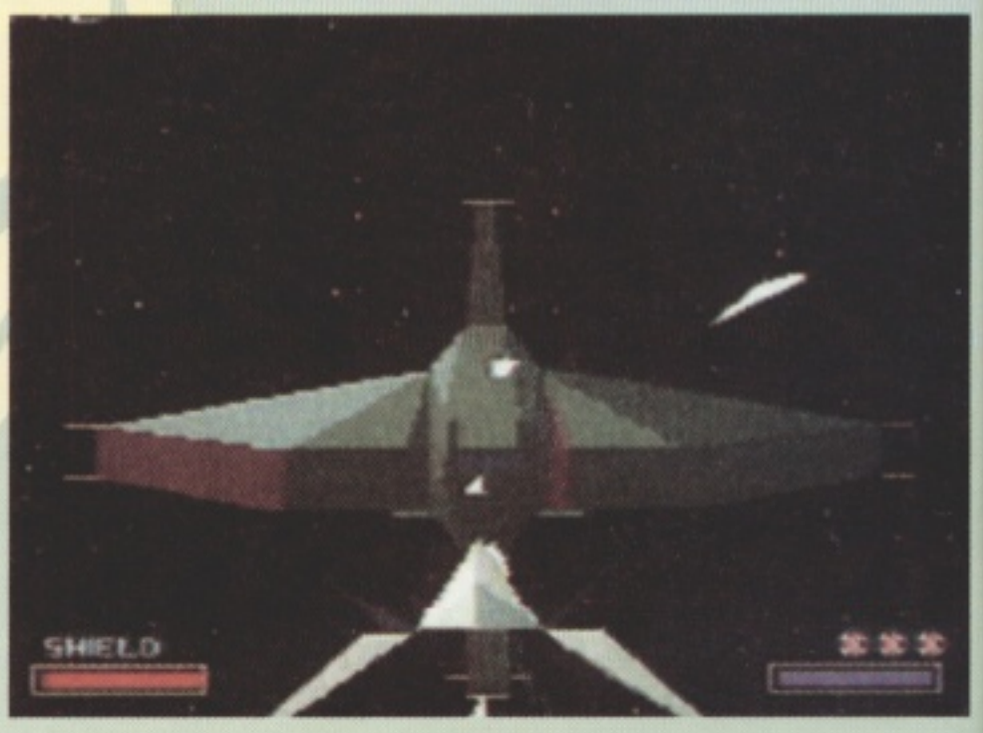
LEVEL ONE, STAGE THREE: THE ANDORF SPACE ARMADA

The game gets altogether tougher in this bit, with many giant alien space cruisers to take on – at one point you actually have to enter one of them and destroy its engines from the inside. Once inside, you can find a power-up which will make you transparent and invulnerable – essential if you're to do well on the rest of this level.





Top left, top right and right: Flying inside the alien space ship that you've got to destroy from the inside, and approaching some kind of alien space station (or something). (*That's actually the end-of-level boss – Ed.*) Ah.



Above: You guessed it – it's the intro to the space armada bit!
Right: And look! Here's the armada itself – lots of little 3D polygon spaceships, each with its own individual thrusty flame thing.

BUT WHAT'S IT ACTUALLY LIKE TO PLAY?

Starfox was shown in Britain for the first time at the recent trade-only Toy And Hobby Fair at Earls Court, London. We made Jonathan Davies embarrass himself in front of the crowds...

'Okay, A is smart-bomb, B is the air-brake, X is turbo-thrust, Y is fire, L is bank right, R is bank left, LEFT is left, RIGHT is right, UP is up and DOWN is down. Off you go.'

'Pardon?' I replied. But he'd gone, and I had no option but to take a deep breath and press START. The intro sequence was great. I took in the mission briefing and then watched from afar as my ship and its companions were launched from Starfox Central. And then – whap! – I was in the cockpit, fighting for my life.

Yikes, I thought, as enemy laser bolts thudded into my ship. I returned fire, taking out baddy after baddy while trying not to crash into the buildings whistling past on either side. Then this big walker thing stepped onto the screen and turned to face me, seemingly impervious to my bullets. Ha! I slammed on the brakes and launched a smart bomb, and the walker thing disappeared in one of the best explosions I've seen in a long time. Things seemed to be going fine. And then it all went horribly quiet.

There was a gentle throbbing sound, and everything went dark. I sank lower in my seat as this massive mothership-thing passed slowly over my head and positioned itself in front of me. It hovered there for a bit, gyrating slowly, and then launched its attack. All these pods poured out of it and headed straight for me! Eek! I was firing like crazy (obviously) and, with the help of a couple of smart bombs, managed to blow up part of the mothership. There was a huge explosion, and it sank lower in the sky, but didn't give up. I kept up my assault till it was reduced to a tiny blob – a shadow of its former self. But it kept shooting at me. And then I died.

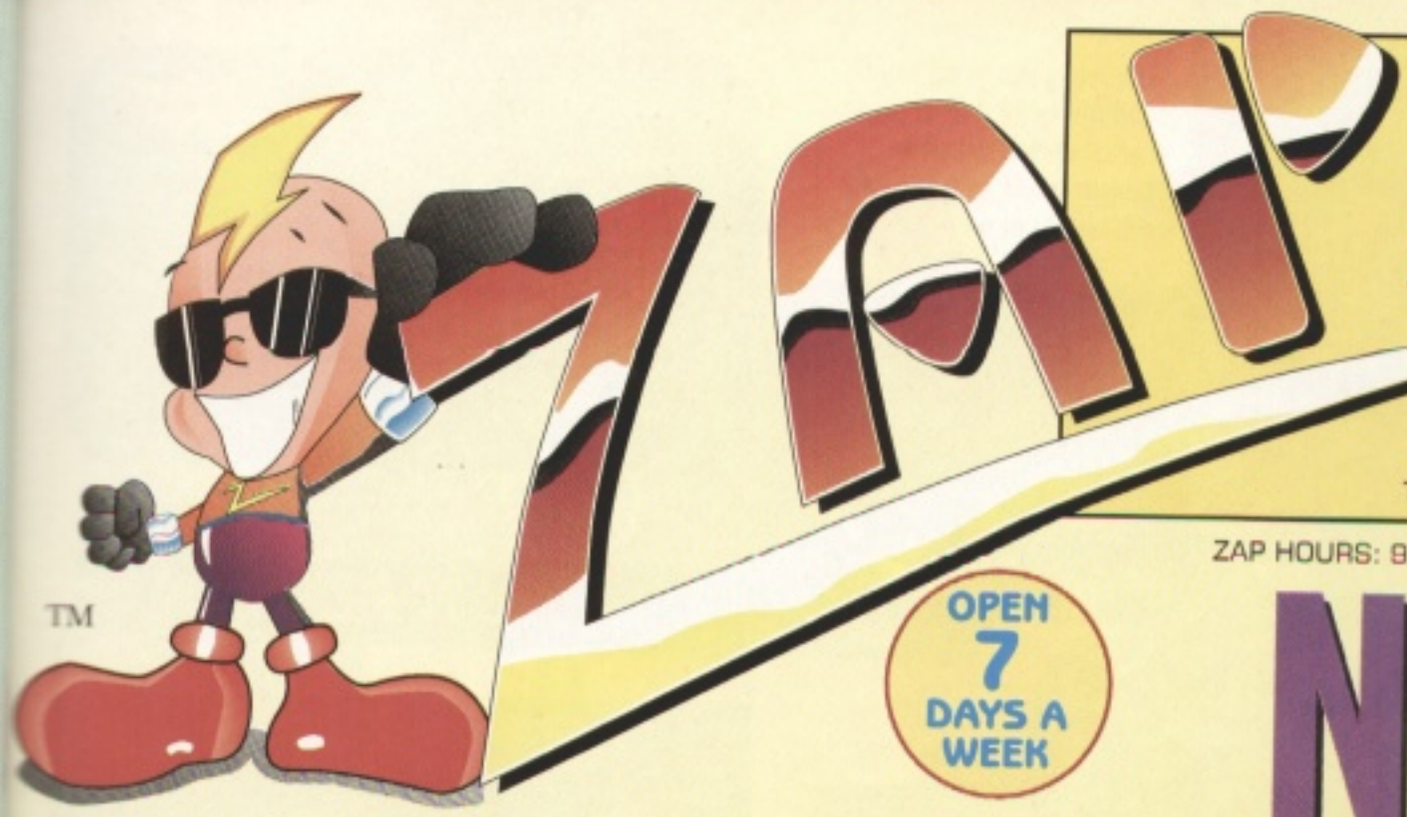
It obviously wouldn't be fair to judge the game from such a cursory examination – for that you'll have to wait for the full review in *Super Play* next month. But, having heard conflicting reports on the speed and smoothness of the graphics, I have to say that I was jolly impressed. While not really approaching the sort of thing that's possible on a top of the range, incredibly expensive PC, they're better than anything an Amiga could do, and very superior to the likes of *Race Drivin'*.

They really are very '3D', too – I actually felt quite scared a few times as missiles hurtled towards me. And the whole *Starfox* experience was very enjoyable. There was always lots going on, the baddies looked great as they swooped about, the controls responded quickly and realistically, the sound effects and explosions were spot-on, and the whole thing was very exciting. (Perhaps assisted by the fact that I was playing it on a gigantic screen between a couple of noisy loud-speakers.) I do hope, though, that the game 'opens out' a bit in later levels. The first level was fine as far as it went, but I could see myself growing weary of just flying along in a straight line, taking the course the game dictated.

'Cor, that was good,' the official fawned. 'People don't usually get that far on their first go.' I muttered something about 'being a professional', then realised that she probably said that to everyone.

Starfox is being released in Japan first, on the 21 February. The US release has been set at the end of March, with the UK version following at the beginning of May. No price has been announced yet.

Just in case you'd forgotten who the game was all about, here's Fox McCloud and co once again. These puppets were made by Nintendo in Japan to fit the UK-developed 3D.



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SUPER SWIV

UK Release

Game: Super SWIV
Publisher: The Sales Curve
Developer: Storm
Price: £44.99
Release: March/April
Players: 1 or 2 simultaneously
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

Silkworm on the Amiga begat *SWIV* on the Amiga. And *SWIV* on the Amiga begat *Super SWIV* on the Super Nintendo. And, er, here it is.

Every game has a Unique Selling Point. (Apart from crap games. Although, come to think of it, people must be buying *Home Alone* for some reason.) *Super SWIV*'s USP is the fact that you can either fly a helicopter through its levels, or drive a jeep. Or both, if you manage to cajole a friend into helping out.

The helicopter's advantage is that it zips around the screen really quickly, without having to worry about dodging any obstacles that might be on the ground. For this reason, it tends to be the primary choice for newcomers to the game.

The jeep, on the other hand, isn't so fast, and has to drive round (or jump over) obstacles. But (but!) it has the big advantage of being able to fire in any direction, including a different direction to the one it's driving in. This makes it more fun in the long run.

Well, here they are in action. What d'ya reckon?

BITS 'N' PIECES

Here, looking rather like something out of *Thunderbirds*, is the giant plane that ferries you into the battlezone.

In fact – yes – here it is, actually ferrying you into the battlezone.

Pump bullets into these green warehouse things and they'll explode, releasing a shower of power-ups.

See? Incidentally, at the very beginning of the first level, if you go to the far right, you'll find a green warehouse thing (like the one above) ready for the taking.

Best of all, team up with a friend (trying not to squabble over who gets the helicopter) for twice the firepower.

These ball things, which spit laser death, are among your trickier adversaries.

There's a rather groovy bit on level four where both vehicles decide to turn into planes and streak off into the clouds.

Cor, lava duck! (*I resign – Ed.*) These bits are fine if you're in the helicopter, but a bit of a nightmare in the jeep.

Their jet planes against our helicopter? That's hardly cricket.

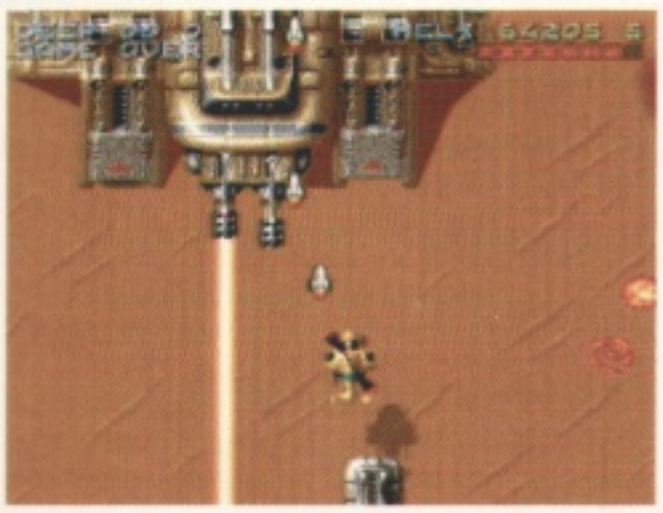
Show *Super Play* an intro sequence and we'll show you one of these film-strip affairs, telling the story frame by frame.

THERE'RE LOTS OF BROWN BITS IN IT!

This is the rather brown sight that greets you as you embark on the desert-based level one.

Level two's quite a bit greener, with lots of camouflaged tanks and things driving around.

You'll make quite a splash here on level three. (It's all very watery, you see.)



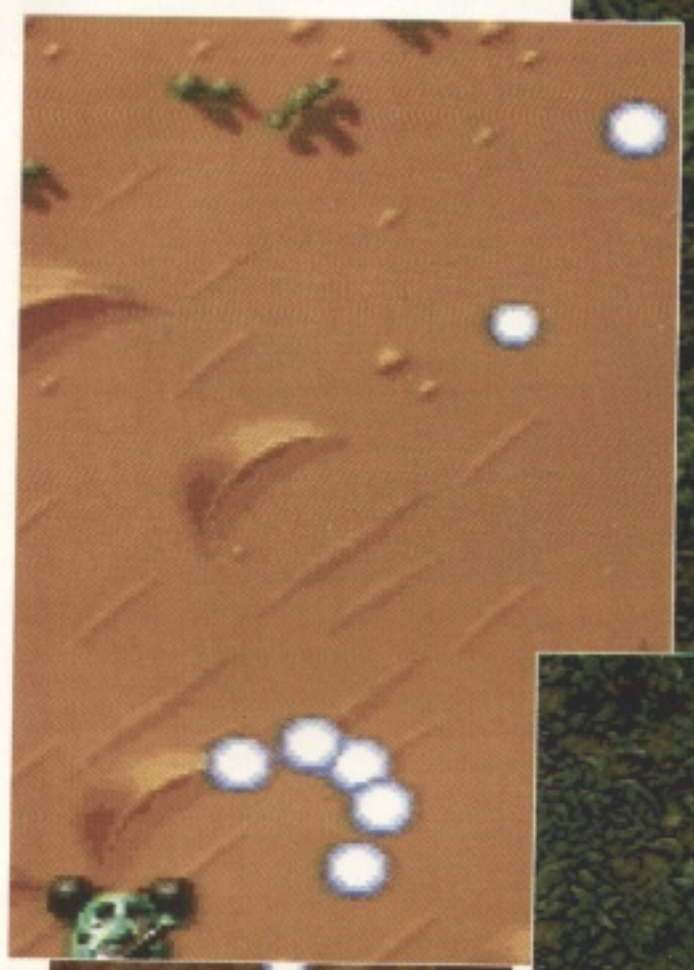
And here's the boss of level one– a large building-type job with a massive laser on the front.

Level two's boss is, er, well, it's another building thing. With lasers. And it's brown.

The boss of level three is this underwater, *Spy Who Loved Me*-style thing.

Yes, yes – but how *good* is it? Turn the page to find out:

Super SWIV is one game where you won't be wanting for weapons. For starters there's your cannon, which can be upgraded into a spread cannon, a flame thrower, a laser or a multitude of other goodies. And then there are special weapons – homing missiles, ordinary missiles, spinny-roundy blob things... the list goes on and on. (Only not here.)



Eek! A bit of space to fill! As it happens, we've been dying to tell you about the trains (an example of which can be seen to the left). And now we can! They look great running up and down their tracks, and even better if you manage to pump enough shells into one of the carriages to make it explode.

AND LOOKING AHEAD...

Pressing ever onwards, here's the giant helicoptery boss from level four.

And here's a glimpse into level six. Coo. (*That's enough levels – we don't want to give* everything *away – Ed.*)

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

In almost every respect, *Super SWIV* isn't in the slightest bit boring. In fact, it's one of the best scrolling shoot-'em-ups on the SNES. Everything about it smacks of quality and professionalism, and in many ways it out-Japaneses the Japanese. (Despite its being coded right here in the UK.) Yup, it's a big thumbs up for *Super SWIV*.

Take the graphics, for example. They're not boring at all. The scrolling's ultra-slick. The sprites are all well designed and animated, and look really purposeful and mechanical, with the shadows under each object giving a good sense of depth.

The way the game is presented is far from boring. There's a good intro sequence, up there with the finest the Japanese can offer, and the options screens and things are nicely done. (Although, frustratingly, despite the hundreds of different control layouts you can choose from, there isn't a way of getting Fire on the Y button and Special Weapon on the B button. Tch.)

It's also quite interesting the way the game expands on the Amiga version. Rather than being a straight conversion, *Super SWIV* takes all the best bits out of the original and sticks in some new ideas of its own. We've now got sideways scrolling, so the playing area is about half as wide again as what's seen on screen. The weapons system, too, is quite a bit more impressive than the Amiga's, with some smashing spread missiles and homing thingies.

And another really non-boring thing about *Super SWIV* is... erm...

Um...

No, it's no good. It's time to face some home truths. But, before we do, I'll just stress it again: *Super SWIV* is one of the best shoot-'em-ups around on the Super Nintendo. As a game it's quite a bit better than *Axelay*, even if it doesn't have the advantage of *Axelay*'s pretty amazing 3D graphics.

But there are, as you may have gathered, one or two aspects of *Super SWIV* which, together, conspire to make the game just a teeny bit boring. Like the graphics. I was fibbing slightly when I said earlier how good they are. On the whole they *are* pretty good – really slick and everything – but they're a bit, well, brown, aren't they? The music (by David 'Interesting' Whitaker) doesn't help matters, either. It's very subdued – perhaps so it doesn't drown out the muffled, weedy explosions that result when you blow something up.

Then there are the bosses. Not only do they tend to be static, ground-based bosses. and rather unimaginatively designed ones at that, but they take absolutely *ages* to kill. They don't strike you as being all that exciting to start off with, but when you've been hammering away at one for a good five minutes without any visible signs of damage, you'll begin to wish that bosses had never been invented. Or shoot-'em-ups. Or life in general.

Finally, although there's always plenty going on on-screen, and always plenty to shoot, there's something not quite right about the way the game's paced. It seems just a tiny bit too slow. Or something. I can't quite put my finger on it. Perhaps it's just the cumulative effect of the problems outlined above.

Anyway, we seem to be drifting off course a little here. *Super SWIV* is a smart game. If anyone tries to tell you otherwise, go and find someone else to talk to. It's got graphics to match the best the Japanese can offer. It's got variety aplenty. And it's lots of fun with two players. It's just a *bit* boring, that's all.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
86%	64%	75%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	82%
83%		

VERDICT: One of the top, ooh, eight scrolling shoot-'em-ups on the SNES. Very slick but, strangely, not as exciting as it could have been.

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RANMA 1/2 PART TWO

The original *Ranma ½* game gained a bit of a cult following when it first appeared on import, although it soon became hopelessly outclassed with the release of Capcom's world beating *Street Fighter II*. Can Part Two make all the difference?

Japanese Release

Game: Ranma 1/2 Part Two
Publisher: NCS Masiya
Developer: In-house
Price: £50-£60
Release: Out now
Players: 1 or 2 simultaneously
Cart ROM: 12 Mbit

Akane has a few tricks up her sleeve – the most obvious being this huge spiky ball on a chain. Fair play? No, just plain silliness.

Here's Ranma in his/her two guises. You can play either in the game, but can't switch them once play starts.

Yes, this time there are even more characters to choose from than the first game! They're the weirdest people-who change-into-other-things-when-doused-by-water you'll ever see.

This is Akane, the girl Ranma's supposed to marry (when he's not a girl himself, that is).

This chap has the wackiest moves in the entire game. He looks just like the King Of Hearts, and uses a giant playing card to block other people's attacks. (No, it's not worth asking us why.)

You might like this. Not a lot...

A suitcase over the head is perhaps best avoided.

This Casino King is a new character, taken from a recent *Ranma* film.

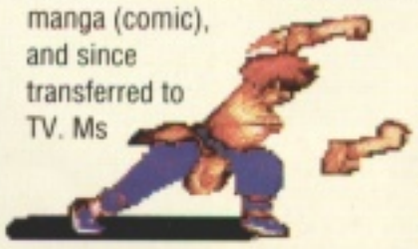
The first opponent you meet in the one player game is this bloke with hammer. Here poor old Ranma's toe gets a wallop.

What's this Ranma 1/2 business all about, then?

So who is Ranma? Well, you may remember a feature we ran in issue 2, which took an exhaustive look at games based on Japanese anime. The original *Ranma 1/2* game was one of those – it's a bizarre story, originally created by a woman called Rumiko Takahashi as a manga (comic), and since transferred to TV. Ms Takahashi is said to have become one of the five wealthiest women in Japan, through the success of her creation.

The plot goes like this: Ranma is a teenage Japanese boy who (through a magic curse which has befallen nearly every character in the show, with different effects), turns into a girl when he gets wet! (Hence, the 1/2 – he's half boy, half girl.) The stories are sort of comedies, but with lots of scrapping – every character can turn into something else at the drop of a, er, drop of water (Ranma's dad becomes a giant panda, for instance), and every character seems keen to putting his/her/its fists up at every opportunity.

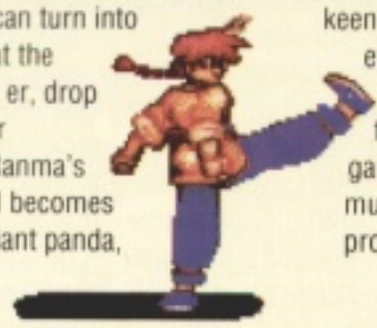
So, choosing a theme for the game didn't pose much of a problem...



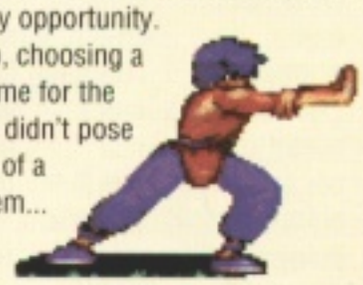
'Hiyaaaaaah!' Time for a hundred-hand slap around the chops...

...Ranma's best special move...

...he blocks his way out of trouble...



...'Doooooooof!' What a guy, eh? (Oh – he's a girl)...



...and finally Ranma does his Ryu impression.

This is Ryger – he's an old foe of Ranma's, and his love rival for Akane.
'Ryu and Ken are pussies!' shouts Ryger, while delivering a gigantic fireball. This being a Japanese-text game, special moves just seem to 'happen' when you fiddle with the buttons (ie, I couldn't work out the controls). Pressing two at the same time seems to work.
Sorry, we don't know who this guy holding a hammer is.
Shampoo attacks with her maracas.
This girl has a spade to whack people around the head with. Poor old Genma the Panda doesn't seem on the idea, and tries to blend into the surroundings.
This is Shampoo – she's got purple hair, and turns into a small pink cat when she gets wet.
一時停止
Ever seen a yellow panda before? Us neither. They crop up here, though, to prevent confusion in the two-player mode.
Genma the panda is Ranma's dad. (He also likes a tipple, as you can see.)
This minotaur is another new character.

Happily, the famous *Street Fighter II* trick, where identical (apart from colour) characters fight it out, has been included for the fairest of one-player matches.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Crikey, I'm not sure about this one – it's hardly the easiest game in the world to judge. The main problem is, of course, the amount of Japanese text in the manual – there's loads of it, and it rather scuppers the process of learning to play the thing. The danger is, of course, that oodles of special moves might have just passed me by. (Those with long memories may remember the original Japanese *Street Fighter II*s had a similar problem when they first arrived in the UK. In that case, however, enough people were familiar with the moves from the English-language arcade game for it not to be quite the problem I had with this.)

The problem with special moves aside, then, how does it work? Well, it's not unlike the original *Ranma* game, which wasn't a favourite of mine, but had a certain charm that couldn't be ignored. This was mostly down to the fabulous range of characters the game boasted, each with their own quirky moves. This element, complete with plenty of new characters, has been carried over to the sequel successfully, but unfortunately everything else looks, to my eye at least, rather less impressive. First, the graphics seem to have suffered slightly – the slick-looking backdrops of the original aren't quite there, but admittedly the animation is just as good, and that's much more important. The sound is similar to the original game too, though the front-end sports a terribly weedy little concoction. (At least the game's packed with lots of humorous Japanese speech, which sounds funny, even if you can't tell what anybody's actually saying.)

As previously mentioned, you're likely to find that the gameplay suffers more from your lack of proficiency in written Japanese than anything else, but that doesn't mean that progress can't be made. After a few hours with the game I felt I was getting the hang of most of it. The bigger, more integral, fault is that many of the fighters' abilities are so poorly matched – something the first game suffered from too. The male and female Ranmas are easily the best characters to use, with many of the others proving useless. This means, of course, that one-player games can be a real doddle, unless the difficulty level is cranked up a bit. (I suppose this allows you to deliberately choose weaker characters to make the game more challenging in one-player mode, but equally it makes some matches too challenge-free to be fun.) When all's said and done, this isn't a game you're going to get all that much game-play out of.

The other big thing is that none of the characters do their magical transformations from human to animal or back again, though they did in the first game – a bit of a waste of a fabulous concept, when you think about it, and something bound to disappoint fans of the characters massively.

All this said, however, I had initially intended to recommend *Ranma 1/2 Part Two* – it's likeable, and full of character, which is more than you can say of many of the *Street Fighter II* clones we've reviewed lately. However, after spending a fair amount of time on it I'm now more reluctant. The fact remains that beat-'em-ups (and especially the one-on-one variety) are incredibly difficult games to perfect, and this is yet another that completely fails to get close to *Street Fighter II* in the entertainment stakes. A fine game to play in short bursts, then, but by no means a must-buy. (And goodness knows where the 12 Mbit has gone – you can't see any evidence of it on screen.)

● Jason Brookes

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
82%	78%	77%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	71%
64%		

VERDICT: Fabulously imaginative, with the weirdest range of moves ever in a beat-'em-up. It's a bit too easy, but anime fans will love it.

TEST DRIVE II

THE DUEL

You may well be wondering what happened to *Test Drive 1*. There wasn't one. Accolade abandoned the project after noticing that its name could easily be misread as 'Test Drivel'. (*Stop lying – Ed.*) Anyway, here, for some reason, is *Test Drive II*.

UK Release

Game: Test Drive II: The Duel
Publisher: Accolade
Developer: Distinctive Software
Price: £44.99
Release: March
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

Here's a typical on-the-road situation. You're stuck behind this painfully slow Volvo estate (or whatever), on a clear road, and you feel you just *have* to overtake. Do you put your foot down, pull out, and let the awesome acceleratative properties of your F40 (or whatever) take over? Or do you hang around behind it and whinge a lot? Only you can decide...

Oops! Somehow we've let a poxy Ford Sierra police car pull us over with a speeding violation. The shame of it!

You want a choice of courses? You got it! *Test Drive II* offers smooth ones, wibbly ones and very wibbly ones. We say: Go for the one at the bottom there!

WORLD'S FASTEST?

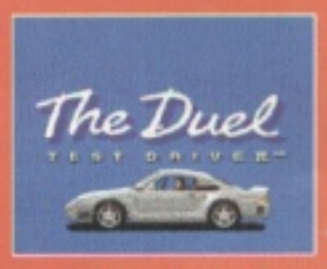
You can choose between three of the world's fastest cars. (At least, three of the world-of-five-years-ago's fastest cars. Give us a Jaguar XJ220, a Dodge Viper, or a McLaren F1 any day). They each have different instrument panels and different engine sounds.

Are you the hot-blooded, passionate, Mediterranean type? If so, take the Ferrari F40.

Or are you more of a cool, calculating Teutonic? If so, the Porshe 959 might be more your cup of tea.

Or perhaps you're, er, the hot-blooded, passionate type after all. In that case, you could always dump the Ferrari and take the Lamborghini Diablo.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?



There are some games that could only possibly work on a games console. *Super Mario Kart*, for example, or *Axelay*. There are others that seem just as happy on a computer as they do on a console – *Gods* is one, as is *The Addams Family*. And symmetry fans will be pleased to note there are computer games that simply don't transfer well to consoles. These tend to be big, complicated games – games that concentrate on recreating the real world in as much detail as possible, at the expense of the 'clean, simple fun' idiom.

Test Drive II is the latest in a long line of Amiga and PC games brought to the Super Nintendo, and it shows. First and foremost it's a car simulation, and it simulates cars pretty well. The gears and things work just fine, and at times it's almost possible to believe that you're actually driving a car. In this respect the game's way ahead of something like *Top Gear*, which always feels like you're playing a game (albeit a fun one). The road scrolls really well, too, although the graphics look a little tawdry.

But it's perhaps because it *is* so realistic that the *Test Drive II* concept doesn't quite seem to hold water. You find yourself thinking: look, all I'm doing is driving along a moderately winding road, that's moderately populated with cars, at a modest 150 mph. Why do I keep crashing? And your conclusion is that there's something not quite right about the controls. While steering round bends seems easy enough, for some reason the simple process of changing lanes is a complete nightmare. It should be easy enough, but strangely you always either go into the back of the car in front or screech out of control and go into a terminal spin. It gets easier with practice, sure, but you tend to find yourself cursing the controls more than you do other drivers.

The other thing you may notice is that driving along an open highway at 200 mph in *Test Drive*'s Ferrari F40 isn't any more exciting than driving down to Sainsbury's in a Mini Metro.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
68%	70%	59%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	58%
54%		

VERDICT: Firmly rooted in its computer-game origins, this looks out of place on the SNES, even though it's a good conversion.

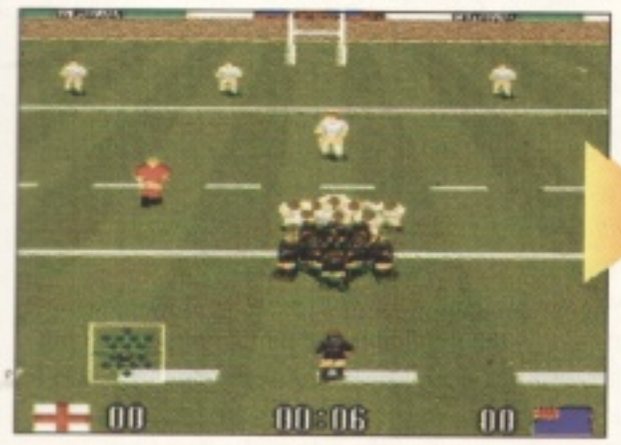
WORLD CLASS RUGBY

Bill Beaumont, Wil Carling and Nigel Starmer-Smith are the only three people we can think of who play rugby. And *World Class Rugby* is the only rugby game we know of on the Super NES. (Spooky, huh?)

It's *World Class Rugby*, the only rugby game on the SNES, and it's the ultimate play-off between Rich as England (hooray!) and Jez as the All Blacks (boo!). The options have all been set (via a usefully user-friendly option screen), and kick off is about to take place. (Note the handy meter at the bottom of the screen for setting the power and direction of your kick.)

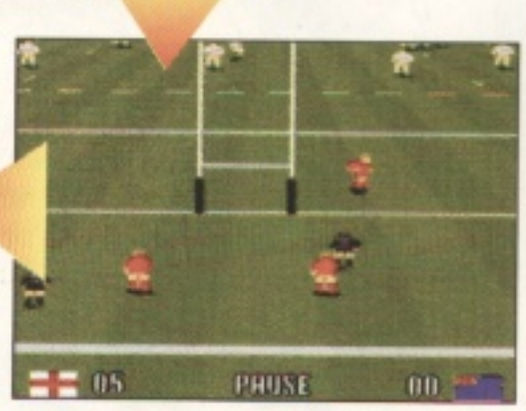
UK Release

Game: World Class Rugby
Publisher: Misawa Entertainment Co. (Original: Audiogenic)
Developer: Denton Designs
Price: TBA
Release: May
Players: 1 or 2 simultaneously
Cart ROM: 4 Mbit



Only six seconds into the game, and it's a scrum down already. Jez has the put in...

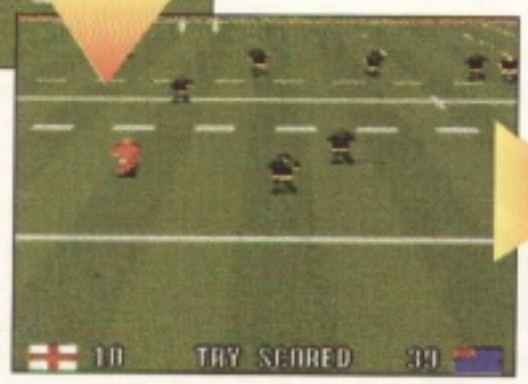
...but Rich, the undisputed favourite, wins it and scores. He goes in for the conversion...



...but misses. (He probably forgot to take into account the wind, which he foolishly set on 'full' before the game started. The clot.)

Jez gets nasty, and tries stamping on one of Rich's guys' heads. The ref isn't having any of it, however.

And, to cut a long story short, Jez scores. And then he scores again. And then he keeps scoring quite a lot of times. (Yawn.) Half-time arrives (eventually) and England looks, to be honest, completely scuppered. But – oops! – Rich 'accidentally' pushed the reset button...



...and it's a draw by default! Honour is saved. (*It wasn't very fair, though – Ed.*)

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

If you always thought football was a funny old game, then perhaps you haven't quite taken the time out to fully consider the implications of rugby. Particularly its incredible number of rules. Backwards passing, close tackling, scrums, rucks, mauls, line outs, penalties and conversions – not only do rugby sims have to include the 'lots of little men running about a big pitch' element of football, they also have to cope with all these things as well.

As as result, rugby games on computer and console format are sparse. (*It couldn't also be because the Americans and Japanese aren't all that into it, could it? – Ed.*) Hmph. And when they do appear, there is invariably so much going on and so much to think about that the experience is simply one of total disgruntlement.

As for *World Class Rugby*, well, it certainly tries its hardest to please. Tackling is automatic, as are rucks, mauls and scrums. Placed kicks and conversions can be judged perfectly, via a handy little meter, and there are always enough players on screen to pass to. The scrolling is fluid enough to follow the ball at all times, and your team members respond faithfully to the joypad. And the Mode 7 graphics work a treat, creating a fine 3D pitch, and following the guy with the ball so you can always tell where he is.

So what's the problem? Well, there isn't one really. True, the game does keep halting to show you the scoreboard, and there are far too many rucks per game – if there are opponents nearby, it proves almost impossible to pick a lose ball from the ground without one, and that ain't realistic. All this is bound to annoy the non-rugby fans amongst you after a while.

Indeed, as a non-rugby player I couldn't help wondering about the suitability of the game for conversion at all. Particularly, I thought the bit which allows you to pick strategies very limited. (You can pick offensive strategies, but not defensive ones.) Although the SNES tries its hardest to position players where you might want them, the formation is never quite as you'd like. It appears this has been thrown out for the sake of a *Kick Off*-like smoothness to the game, but I can't help feeling we lose out on something.

However, that said, Jez – who does play rugby – loved the game. And you can't say fairer than that.

● Rich Pelley

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
73%	78%	70%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	74%
80%		

VERDICT: *Rugby* has none of the failings of, say, *Kick Off*, and will be great for fans. The rest of us will find it a bit stop/start, however.

MANGA

FROM GRAPHIC ACTION TO ACTION GRAPHICS: WHAT SUPER NINTENDO GAMERS OWE TO THE COMICS

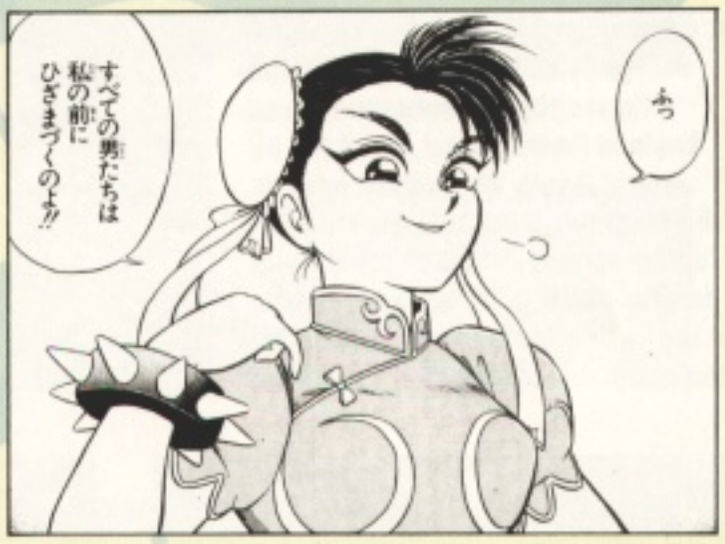
The bizarre nature of many Japanese games can at least be partly explained by a study of the manga, or comics, on which they're based. Jim Swallow – Japanese comics expert and Super Nintendo fan – does his level best to explain.

Visual media in Japan is a many-headed hydra of an industry, a slavering monster that lumbers back and forth across the country showering products on unsuspecting 'otaku' (fans) like a tropical monsoon. This beast never loses its step, as it gobbles up the cash fed to it by the folk who buy the game carts, the anime tapes, the comics, the toys, the colouring books, the cuddly Chun Li dolls... Its only enemies are the twin warriors of Fashion and Trend, who regularly lop off the odd head or two here and there, when a product goes stale and falls out of favour. But the hydra is strong, and for every head severed, two more appear to take its place. Nowhere is this more true than in the Japanese comics industry, where at least a billion comics are published *every* year. (It's been said that the Japanese use more paper to make comic books than they do to make toilet paper.) The Japanese word for comic is 'manga', pronounced just how it reads, and, literally translated, it means 'involuntary pictures'!

Recognise this little lot? It is, of course, the *Street Fighter II* cast, in one of the many *SFII* comics.

In the West, comics tend to be thought of as pure kiddie fodder, or as subversive underground trash, and those who read them are often treated accordingly – it's unlikely you'll ever see a suited corporate businessman-type reading a copy of *The Amazing Spiderman* on the train. But in Japan the reverse is the norm. Massive (by Western standards) phone-book sized comics line the shelves of street-corner news vendors, and they're purchased not only by teenaged boys, but by their fathers, mothers, sisters, girlfriends, grandparents... even their teachers and employers.

The range of titles and subjects for manga is mindbogglingly wide – everything from science fiction to swords and sorcery, sports to romance, history to the military, even comedy and pornography are all available as weekly comics, produced by the truckload to feed the hundreds and thousands of fans across the country. The weekly manga books, commonly known as 'shonen manga', are usually anything up to 300 pages long, printed black-and-white on thick newsprint-style paper. In a given week over 8,000,000 will be sold. Unlike most American comics, which only feature one story running throughout, manga can often contain 10 or more different titles running in serial format, week after week, not unlike the British *2000AD*. The shonen manga are made to be disposable, like many of Japan's consumer products – to be read and then thrown away, the same as we do a daily newspaper. Western comics, which are often avidly collected and traded, differ from manga in this way.



Looking gorgeous and haughty, Chun Li mocks a defeated opponent in this scene from the *Street Fighter II* comic strip. The action in *SFII* is spectacular!

However, the stories aren't completely throwáway. If a manga becomes very popular, it will often be reprinted in large volumes that gather the sections of the serial together. These volumes are printed on higher quality paper, with glossy slipcovers, and are made to be kept by collectors and fans.

It goes further too. A manga series is often the starting point for a hot media property – many titles go on to be animated into TV shows, movies, or video series by manga's sister industry, anime (for more on this facet of Far East media, take a look at Helen McCarthy's regular Anime World column, on page 20). Novels can be based on manga characters, too – something almost unheard of in the West. And, of course, console games also spin-off from the merchandising super-nova that always occurs when a comic becomes popular.

And it's not always a one-way street – original games and anime frequently spawn manga versions of themselves to fuel the wants of trendy fans. Ryu and co from *Street Fighter II* are a case in point, with a serialised tale of their pugilistic antics appearing in a Japanese Nintendo magazine. These short bites of kinetic *SFII* conflict are so heavily filled with speed-lines as to give a reader a nose-bleed! Indeed, look at any Japanese games magazines you'll find a few pages of manga strip in amongst the cartridge reviews and cheat sheets. Chances are, you'll find something similar

Now *that's* action! Japanese comics, like this *Ranma 1/2*, use outrageous speed-lines and effects to create a feeling of movement.

SCOPE

BY JIM SWALLOW

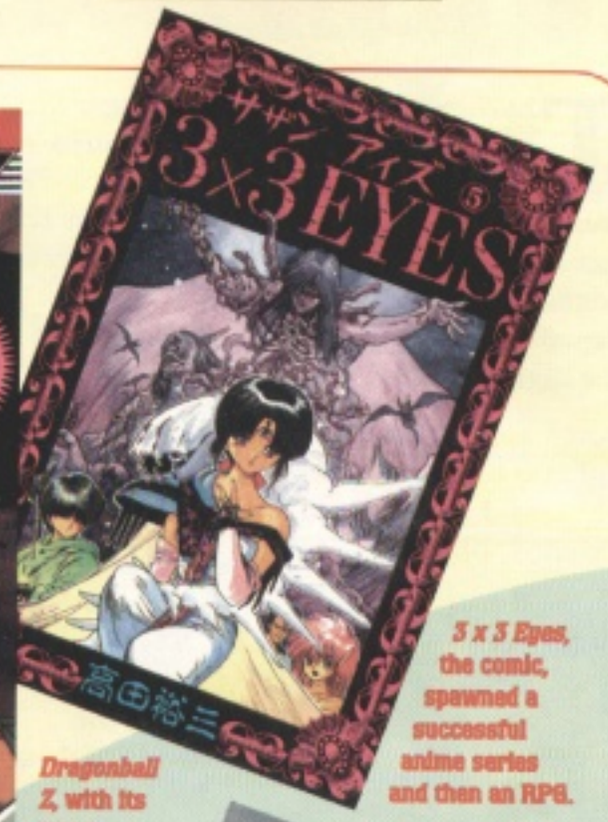
if you glance through a Japanese role-playing games magazine, or a paintball sports monthly, or even a week-by-week motor maintenance course where part one comes with a free binder...

It's clear, even to the casual observer, that manga is a major, perhaps an integral, part of the visual media culture in Japan, read by everyone at least once in their lives, free of the 'fanboy' stigma attached to it here in the West.

One thing that happens often is that special edition comicbooks are launched to promote new games – often packaged with Japanese games magazines. And comic strips based on games often appear in the body of a magazine, telling the story, or featuring characters from the game.

In this way manga has a lot in common with computer and video games, which without doubt hold a similar place in Nippon culture, while being similarly looked down on in the West. Indeed, with the propagation and multi-media expansion of manga, the connection between the two is stronger than ever, and looks set to stay that way. To see this, just take a look at the Japanese Super Famicom games rated in What Cart? (see pages 88 to 93) – the marketing forces behind Nippon's comicbook empire have not been slow to exploit the manga/game connection, adapting comic-to-cartoon hits like *Ranma 1/2*, *Area 88*, *Ushio And Tora*, and *Hokuto no Ken* (aka *Fist Of The North Star*) into games for Japan's console top gun. Anyone who's seen any of these games will agree – the characteristically expressive and dynamic Japanese art style has proved perfect for transference from paper to cartridge. If you're one of the people who've enjoyed games based on Japanese manga, you'll be interested in reading more about the original source material – maybe you'd even be interested in getting hold of the comics for yourselves. This is where I come in. Over the next few pages I hope I'm going to make it clear what game-related comics are available, where you can get them, and – yes – if they're actually any good.

Dragonball Z, with its mass destruction and sci-fi fights, is popular.



3 x 3 Eyes, the comic, spawned a successful anime series and then an RPG.

Ranma 1/2 is one of the most popular strips of all. This is actually a translated US version of the comic – look for it at your local comic shop.

This is Doraemon, the very cute atom-powered robot cat, soon to appear on SNES.

Dragon Quest, the most popular RPG series in Japan, has spawned its own comics too.

Ken and co look just as brutal in the comics as in *North Star Ken 6* et al.

These 'ere colourful *Dragonball Z* panels are from a comic that uses still frames from the anime series, instead of original artwork. (There are, of course, more conventional *Dragonball* comics too.)

YOU'VE PLAYED THE GAME: NOW READ THE COMIC

The Super Nintendo is no stranger to comicbook heroes and adventures – games like *The Rocketeer*, *Spiderman & The X-Men*, *Batman*, and the ubiquitous *Ninja Turtles* can all trace their ancestry back to the humble comicbook. What follows is a look at the Japanese manga heroes who have crossed into the digital realm...

RANMA 1/2

Loveable characters and high farce typify *Ranma 1/2*.

One of the most popular types of SNES games by far is the beat-'em-up, in the tradition of the grandaddy of them all, *Double Dragon*. Although the mega-hit *Street Fighter II* currently stands supreme in this field, some of the wannabes for that honour stem from the pages of manga.

A good example is *Ranma 1/2*, also known as *Neighborhood Combat*. Perhaps the best way to describe the manga this game was based on is as a polymorphic kung-fu sex comedy! Created by Ms Rumiko Takahashi, who is said to command one of the highest wages for a woman in the whole of Japan, *Ranma 1/2* is a delicate (ha!) tale of martial arts, romantic relationships and water-induced shape-changing.

Ranma was an explosive hit when it first appeared in the pages of *Shonen Sunday* in August '87, and, two years later, the manga crossed over to become a popular television series. What made it so sought-after? *Ranma* was blessed with the 'Takahashi touch', in a story which told the tale of a young man (Ranma Saotome) and his dad (Genma), the last experts in a long-dead fighting form, who accidentally fall into enchanted pools and become cursed to transform into whatever previously died in said pond when doused with cold water. As Ranma's pond contained a girl, and his dad's a panda, things became rather complicated when the question of Ranma's arranged marriage came up...

And if that's not odd enough, Ranma's life soon becomes beset with martial arts adversaries, some of whom have fallen for him as a guy, some whom have fallen for him as a girl, some of whom have fallen in other enchanted pools, and *all* of whom are spoiling for a good punch-up. All of the above not only made for very funny stories, it also lead naturally to a great idea for a martial arts game licence, and voila! *Ranma 1/2 Neighborhood Combat* hits the screen.

The game follows the usual character versus character style, with the exception that some of the players may change into pandas, cute pink cats, or small black pigs at the drop of a bucket (full of cold water, that is). A quick tip: if you fancy going head-to-head with yourself, hold down L and R while selecting characters. A sequel game has recently been released in Japan, on the SNES and the PC Engine, complete with fully sampled sound and animated sequences from the TV series – check the review on page 38 for more details.

Sounds good, you're probably thinking. So where can I get hold of some *Ranma* comic books? Well, the original manga series is currently available in its raw form as paperback volumes containing the original *Shonen Sunday* stories, or in a shorter format translated into English by Viz Communications as *Ranma 1/2 Part Two* (issues 1 to 11 are on sale now in specialist comic shops). Other Takahashi tales worth checking out are *Lum Urusel Yatsura* (another romantic comedy, this time with a lecherous-boy-meets-extremely-cute-alien-babe theme), *Fire Tripper*, a time-travel story, and *The Laughing Target*.

FIST OF THE NORTH STAR

***Fist Of The North Star* is the perfect beat-'em-up licence. Both the manga and the animated movie (available in English from Island World Video), is full of bone-crunching fisticuffs, just itching to be played out on your console. First seen in 1983 in the pages of *Shonen Jump* magazine, *Fist*, or *Hokuto no Ken* as it's known in Japan, was a post-holocaust, *Mad Max*-style epic about a lone warrior, Ken (which means 'fist' in Japanese) and his quest across a ruined world filled with violent gangs and other hazards. Throughout his weekly adventures until the story's end in August 1988, Ken wrangled with muscular bad guys using his North Star fighting style to rend and tear flesh and bone in a variety of graphic battles.**

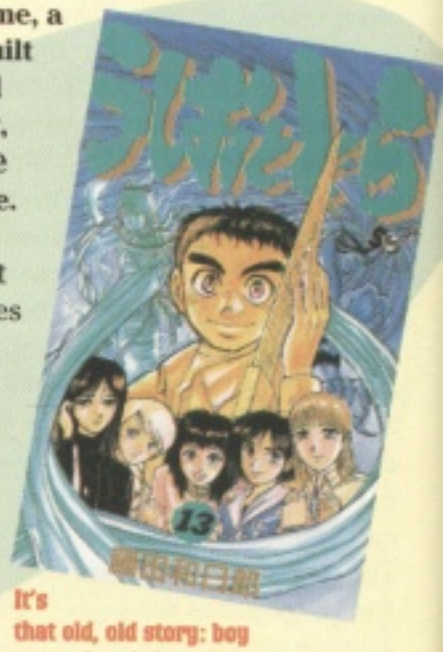
Naturally, this style of martial arts mayhem was perfect for the prevailing beat-'em-up trend in games that began in the late '80s and, sure enough, after battling on the NES and the Game Boy, big Kenshiro cut his teeth on the SNES with *North Star Ken 5*, a combination RPG and punch-up bonanza. Recently, this has been followed by the cleverly titled *North Star Ken 6*, which tries to be *SFII*, but just doesn't cut it. Despite some good graphic pow!, *NSK6* lacks the staying power of the more varied *SFII*. The manga is still a popular seller in its original collected format, marketed by Jump Comics, and it was also translated by Viz Communications into English as an eight-issue series. A further colour comic mini-series was planned by Viz, but this has yet to appear.

Gross, crude artwork make *Fist Of The North Star* one for the strong stomached.

USHIO & TORA

***Ushio And Tora* is one of the most recent of the action/beat-'em-up crop on the SNES, based on a manga and anime video series of the same name. The plot of *U&T* is the simple story of a boy and his tiger-demon. Ushio (the boy) and his family are descended from a great warrior, who 500 years ago captured a powerful demon-creature (Tora, or Tiger) and pinned it to a stone with his magic spear. Since that time, a temple has been built around the trapped beast to imprison it, and the family have kept the legend safe.**

When Ushio unwittingly pulls out the spear, he releases not only Tora, but several other nasty spirit creatures as well, and the boy and his master form an odd alliance to destroy the 'supernatural vapours' that escaped when the temple seal was breached.



It's that old, old story: boy meets (erm) tiger demon.

The manga is currently appearing weekly in *Shonen Sunday*, and will soon be collected into reprint volumes. As yet, however, no translation house has decided to licence the comicbook, so an English version isn't available. However, a video anime series has started, based on the comics. The SNES-cart, produced by Yutaka/Bandai, is a two-tiered combat action saga with eight levels, where the player can take the part of young Ushio with his magical beast spear (the kemono no yari), or as Tora, with his tiger claws and his demon spells.

DRAGONBALL Z

Another popular genre for SNES carts is the RPG combat and strategy game, made famous by titles like *Zelda*, *Soul Blazer* and the *Final Fantasy* series, which itself has its own simplistic manga, given away as free specials with a major Japanese Nintendo mag. The manga-rooted games have a presence here too, with games like *Dragonball Z* and *Dragonball Z III*, the follow-up. Based on a TV show which is the sequel to an earlier show (*Dragonball*) – and was itself based on a manga series in *Shonen Jump* weekly – this

Action, monsters and lots of shouting: that's the shallow-but-fun *Dragonball Z*.

More heavy aggro from the all-action world of *Dragonball*.

combat/RPG revolves around battles with bad guys who want the mystical Dragonballs, which are scattered around the globe. Chinese legend tells that when all seven balls are brought together, the Dragon God Shen Lung will grant the possessor a single wish, and naturally the bad guys (evil space aliens) want them to do no good with. The cast of the series is well represented, with gangs of shapechangers (who said *Ranma* out there?) mixing up with gun-crazed bunnygirls and martial arts wackos. Generally, *Dragonball Z* as a cart is a non-starter – because of the heavy Japanese text content – but the battle scenes are sharply rendered, and all the series characters get a look in on the combat sequences.

The manga featured in *Shonen Jump* for several years, and the entire collected saga is available in the original Japanese for anyone brave enough to decipher it for themselves.

DRAGON QUEST V

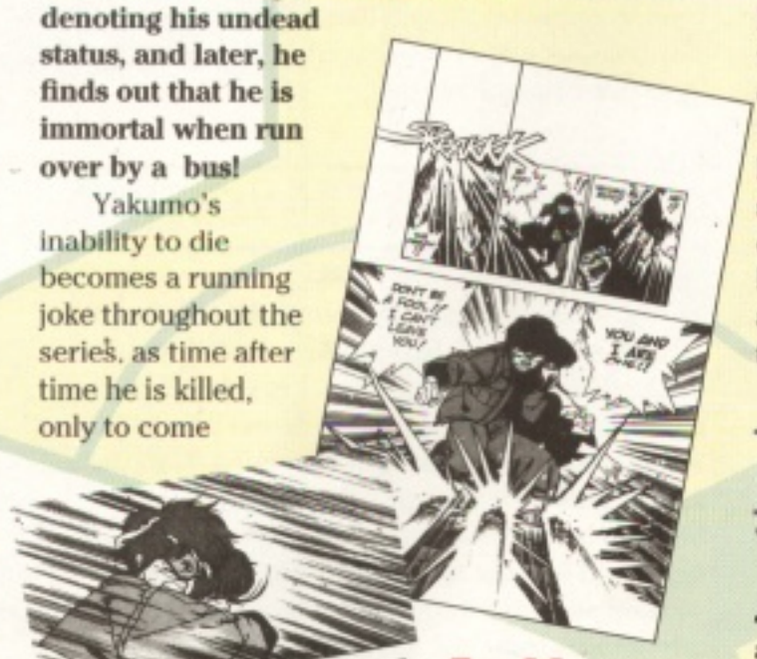
Staying with dragons and the like for a moment, *Dragon Quest V* is a good example of a game that has crossed back over the media barrier and created the demand for a manga based on the game, rather than vice-versa. This is largely due to the influence of the character designer Akira Toriyama, who in addition to helming the production of one of Japan's most popular games ever (drawing crowds of tens of thousands when the game premiered), was also a manga artist, and the creator of the aforementioned *Dragonball* series. This 12 Mbit colossus of an RPG stayed glued at the number one slot on the Japanese charts for months, prompting a 'Making Of' documentary on NHK, the Japanese equivalent of the BBC. Originally closely linked with the game's story, the manga and the TV anime series it was based on were changed so that only the series' name was the same. Currently, the manga is untranslated, and the reprint books are difficult to locate outside Japan.

Dragon Quest, like many Jap comics, features *lots* of shouting.

3X3 EYES

Another manga which became an action RPG was the present day mystical adventure series *3x3 Eyes*, which, not surprisingly, featured a cute girl with three eyes (although the extra one only appeared when she wielded her mighty magical powers). The manga told the tale of Pai, the last of a species of three-eyed humanoids with strange powers (the Triclops), who live in a remote part of China. In the beginning of the saga, Pai came to Japan to search for the son of the professor who sends her to him as a dying request, and in the process becomes involved in a plot to control powerful demons. Seemingly sweet and innocent, Pai's personality changes while in the throes of her magic-using, and it's during one of these episodes that the son she's been seeking, Yakumo, is accidentally killed by her pet bird-demon. Pai is forced to blend her life-force with Yakumo to bring him back from the dead, but in doing so she turns him into a zombie. He discovers a strange Chinese letter on his head, denoting his undead status, and later, he finds out that he is immortal when run over by a bus!

Yakumo's inability to die becomes a running joke throughout the series, as time after time he is killed, only to come back to life again. After teaming up with Pai, Yakumo realises that their only hope of leading a normal life is to find the mystic Statue Of Humanity, which will make Pai a human being and de-zombify him. But, dark powers want the ugly little statue to summon an evil demon, and the intrepid duo, together with a Chinese archeologist called Ling Ling, are forced to race against time to find the statue first. From this background, the RPG game posed a quest: to recover the statue and save Pai, or die trying...



These *3x3 Eyes* pages show the spectacular high speed dynamics of Jap action comics – stronger than anything in *Marvel* et al.

From its weekly serial version, first published in 1983 by Kodansha Ltd, *3&3 Eyes* has been reprinted in several Japanese language volumes, and translated into a five-issue mini-series by American comics company Innovation. You might still be able to find this in specialist comic shops.

In addition to the manga and the games cart, the series was also successful as an animated video, a translated version of which is slated for release by Island World's Manga Video label soon.

DORAEMON: WORLD OF THE FAIRIES

A more recent RPG/cute-'em-up release, which is bound to be confusing, is *Doraemon: World Of The Fairies*, a new title for Epoc software. The Doraemon of the title is the star of a popular animated TV series and a manga that has sold over 55,000,000 copies since its first appearance in 1971. Doraemon is a nuclear-powered robot cat, capable of travelling with his young friend Nobita into the Fourth Dimension by way of Nobita's desk drawers – something similar to *Jamie And The Magic Torch*! The atomic cat proved that he had won the hearts of the Japanese by best-selling his 33 volume manga series, and drowning the toy market with cuddly Doraemons. The comic volumes are still on sale, and still a hot property, although no-one has translated his adventures into English.

This is Doraemon, the cute atomic robo-cat soon to appear in a new Super NES game, and very big in Japan.

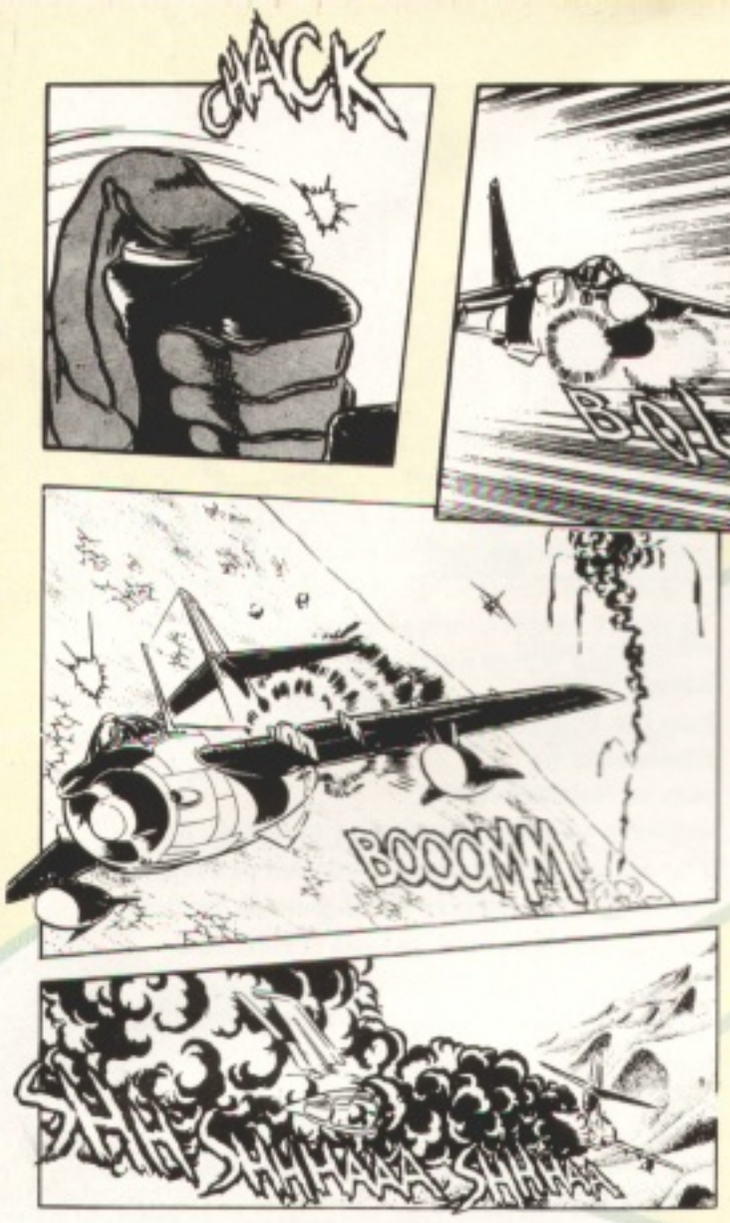
AREA 88

Many manga series are packed with ultra violent scenarios ideal for smart game designers to turn into arcade-action blasters, so it comes as a surprise that the only real manga shoot-'em-up conversion so far has been the mercenary war epic, *Area 88*, known as *UN Squadron* in the US/UK. This coin-op conversion of an arcade hit stems from a manga series that ran for a few years in the late '70s and early '80s, a multi-volume epic of love, war, treachery and honour. *Area 88* was very much a jet fighter soap opera, kind of like *Top Gun* with a little *Dallas* mixed in for dramatic tension.

Area 88: one of the few war comics to come to the West.

The story revolved around Shin Kazama, a Japanese pilot who is drafted into the mercenary air force of a warring North African state after being betrayed by his former best friend, Kanzaki. While Kanzaki wings his way to Japan to take control of the airline company they both worked for, and have his evil way with the boss's daughter Ryoko (Shin's true love), Shin finds himself forced to fight to survive in the desert skies, battling the enemy from the airbase Area 88. As Ryoko tries to find her lost love, Shin crosses paths with Kanzaki, and becomes involved in hazardous missions, each time fearing that he has become a heartless killer, and not the same man that Ryoko fell in love with...

Of course, the sentimental stuff was neatly trimmed away for the game licence, and *Area 88* was turned into a hard-hitting shoot-'em-up featuring stages based loosely on the manga and anime. The characters in the game are drawn straight from the manga, with the three pilots that a player can select; Shin Kazama in his F-20 Tigershark, Mick Scymon in his F-14 Tomcat, and Greg Gates in his A-10



The high speed action in *Area 88* plays just like a film, and is equally as exciting as anything *Top Gun* et al has to offer. These action scenes go on for 10 pages at a time.

Thunderbolt. Other characters are McCoy, the money-grabbing equipment-supplier to the pilots, who appears on the weapons selection screen in the game, and Saki Vashutarl, the base commander and chief of Area 88's forces. Saki appears to give the player his mission briefing at each stage, and in case you're wondering why he has an 'X' on his forehead, it's because he has dishonoured his family by fighting against his father in the desert war. In the manga, Shin was forced to fight till he survived three years or made $1,500,000, while players of the game only have to make it through a dozen levels of intense warfare to reach the end!

Since the original Japanese manga finished several years ago, the collected volumes are a little hard to come by, but the ever-present Viz Communications translation team produced an English version of the comic from April 1988 onwards until the comic was halted at its 42nd issue. The English translation was only a small part of the entire saga, which went on for volumes and volumes, finally ending with Shin and Ryoko reunited, and the nasty Kanzaki getting his just deserts. An animated series of the manga was also produced in three 'acts', featuring a different version of the tale. If you like aviation, the comic is worth a look just for the excellent aircraft artwork by creator Kaoru Snintani.

MAGICAL GUY ADVENTURE

Going to the other end of the spectrum is *Magical Guy Adventure*, known in Japan as *Magical Talruto-Kin*, a platform cute-'em-up if ever there was one. Very much in the mould of the concept-proven *Super Mario* line, *Talruto-Kun* the game can be traced from its first appearance as a manga strip in the weekly *Shonen Jump* magazine. Although it really found fame and fortune as a kiddie 'toon, the manga version was also a big seller, relaying the adventures (magical adventures, that is) of kiddie wizard Talruto and his very long tongue. The game features Talruto on a quest to rescue his girlfriend, a cute little girl wizard, as he licks the marauding bad guy sprites to death. It isn't half strange, but Japanese kids like it, and so it sells.

Cute Super Deformed robots crop up on TV, in games *and* in comics. Indeed, here's one now.

SUPER DEFORMED HEROES

At this stage, a mention should probably be made of the huge range of Super Deformed, or SD, games that are available, and their relation to manga. The recent trend in Japanese animation and media is to create 'cutsy' versions of popular characters; examples are SNES carts like *SD Dodgeball*, *SD Great Battle* and *SD Gundam*. By far the most famous and most merchandised is the Super Deformed *Gundam* series, which has created a massive range of SD toys and model kits, as well as cartoon shows, game carts and comic books. The SD comics tend to be small affairs, not as well produced as their more 'serious' counterparts. Often, the SD comics are freebies with other SD products, or they are short one-offs printed in specials and shonen manga magazines.

COMICS BASED ON GAMES: THE RELATIONSHIP COMES FULL CIRCLE

Guess what this *SFII* strip was all about? (That's right.)

Other movie-based game titles, like *Gundam F-91* and *Ultraman*, have also seen print as manga comics, but these tend to be produced as much less ambitious spin-offs, rather than as full-blown manga stories. Usually, manga versions of popular products like *Gundam F-91*, or *GPX CyberFormula*, will be adaptations of the animated movies they stem from, sometimes in the form of 'movie comics' that present the anime in 'photostory' form using still pictures taken from the cartoon or movie. Other types of manga that relate to movie titles are those with several short strips based on characters or incidents from the movie in question. Sometimes serious, but mostly for fun and spoof value, these are sometimes known as paro, or parody titles.

The difference with these titles is that the manga versions come after the anime/game, etc, rather than being the basis for them, like those we mentioned earlier.

COMIC SHOPPING: WHERE TO FIND IT

Finding manga in its translated form is no tougher than taking a look in your local comic shop. The titles mentioned in this article – *Area 88*, *Fist Of The North Star*, *Ranma 1/2*, *Ranma 1/2 Part Two*, *Lum Urusei Yatsura*, *Fire Tripper*, *The Laughing Target* and *3x3 Eyes* – amongst others, are available as current or back issues from comic shops like:

- Forbidden Planet, 71 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1D6.
- Gosh!, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH.
- Nostalgia & Comics, 14-16 Smallbrook Queensway, Birmingham B5 4EN.
- Sheffield Space Centre, 33 The Wicker, Sheffield S8 8HS

Untranslated manga in either compiled volume form (the size of a small paperback book) or as a weekly shonen manga magazine is more difficult to get hold of. If you live in a city with its own Far East quarter, you may find them on sale in newsagents and supermarkets. The titles mentioned in this article – *Area 88*, *Hokuto no Ken*, *Ranma 1/2*, *3x3 Eyes*, *Magical Talruto-Kun*, *Dragonball*, *Doraemon The Atomic Cat*, *Gundam*, *SD Gundam*, *Ushio And Tora*, and *Dragon Quest* – may be available from:

- Japan Centre, 212 Piccadilly, London W1V 9LD. (The Japan Centre also sells manga and anime merchandise and Japanese games magazines, as well as imported Super Nintendo and Game Boy carts.)
- Books Nippon, 64-66 St. Paul's Churchyard, London EC4M 8AA.

Further information on manga and anime can be got from *Anime UK* magazine, produced bi-monthly at £3.50 an issue, edited by Anime World columnist Helen McCarthy, and available from all good SF and comic shops, or straight from the publishers at *Anime UK* Magazine, 70 Mortimer Street, London W1.

Those of you who'd like to know more about manga should read the definitive manga book: *Manga!, Manga! The World Of Japanese Comics* by Frederik L Schodt, printed by Kodansha Ltd. This too is available from the Japan Centre.

The range of manga being translated is rising every month, as newer and more dynamic titles appear. Since the first true manga crossover into the Western comics industry in 1988, the number of manga and manga-inspired comics has topped 150. With subject matter ranging from giant robot battles to kung-fu to comedy drama, manga has a lot to offer. Forget everything you know about Western comics, and take a chance on something a little bit different – you may find that you like what you see!

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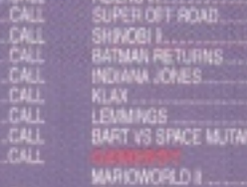

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STREET FIGHTER II

SUPER PLAYER'S GUIDE

CAPCOM (JAP/US/UK)

By Allan Brett

So you reckon you know all about *Street Fighter II*, eh? Well cast your eyes over the pages that follow and think again. They comprise the ultimate guide to all seven characters, telling you how to get the best use out of each one, and how to avoid finding yourself at the the wrong end of 'the ultimate humiliation' – a Perfect. And how do you know it's the ultimate guide? Because it's been put together by Britain's best games player (and that's official): Allan Brett, winner of the National Computer Games Championships of 1992.

Forget about lesser mags who claim to have the 'definitive' guide to *SFII*. This guide is constructed with the help of some of the best players in the country. I'll give you a run-down of each character's abilities, and then all of their bone-bustin' combinations. (*All top* Street Fighter II *players talk like this – Ed.*) Finally I'll tell you the dirtiest tricks going, which no compact powder can shift at 40°C.

Remember that this guide is not for all the crap players out there who choose to fight the computer (on anything but level seven). Computer-controlled opponents become predictable and, as any half-skilled player will realise, human opponents call for far more skill to beat. Therefore, the dirty tactics are tricks to try on your mates, or that pro who rules the local arcade.

A Few Hints

- Many people (including me) develop a very predictable style of play. Vary your tactics. A good trick is to fake part of your routine and punish your opponent when he reacts. (Remember: even if your style of play is littered with flashy combos, it doesn't mean you're unpredictable.)
- Pressure tactics are best. Corner your opponent and throw a series of random kicks and punches. (Though not too random!) Hopefully your opponent will panic and try to escape, whereupon a well-placed kick or punch should dispatch them nicely.
- Every little counts. If you knock your opponent down, throw a Fireball and time it so that he must block as he gets up. A little bit of energy is depleted – not much, but it could be the difference between winning and losing.
- Never use the soft jab and throw technique. It's not foolproof, and you're liable to receive a smack in the gob.

Guile had better get a move on if he wants to defeat Chun Li.

E HONDA

SPECIAL MOVES

Sumo Headbutt
Hundred Hand Slap

COMBINATION MOVES

Slightly lacking as far as combos are concerned, but they're easy to execute.

COMBO 1

Jump in with a Bellyflop and use a medium Squat Kick upon landing. Follow up with the Sumo Headbutt.

COMBO 2

Fly in with a Headbutt and then a slap, followed by a Hundred Hand Slap.

COMBO 3

Deadly, but simple. Jump in with a hard kick and take your opponent out with a close range, double hit hard kick again.

MASTER COMBO

Bear hug. Upon release, smash your opponent with a Hundred Hand Slap and finish with a Headbutt.

DIRTY TRICKS

1 After a throw or grab attack, your opponent's landing should instantly be greeted by a Hundred Hand Slap.
2 Occasionally you may be able to fool your opponents with a slow Headbutt rather than a fast one.
3 Remember, Honda's Headbutt can cause double damage at close range.
4 Attack in phases, using a 3-4 hit combo, then back off. Use Honda's double hits, as his hit speed is lacking.
5 Honda's too slow to keep up with the others, so keep them in the corner.

E Honda knocks Dhalsim's block off with a neatly executed Hundred Hand Slap.

RYU/KEN

SPECIAL MOVES

Dragon Punch
Fireball
Hurricane Kick

Combination Moves

Some are pretty similar but have varying effectiveness in different situations.

COMBO 1

Jump in with a hard kick, trying to get it to hit below the neck. Follow this up with a medium sweep and then finish with a Fireball. Practice is recommended when attempting to do this. In time you can produce a combination move of lethal speed.

COMBO 2

Jump in with a hard punch, and then deliver an uppercut followed by a Fireball – a stunning and almost foolproof method.

COMBO 3

Not so much a combo, more an extended version of the Dragon Punch. Get in close, and use a strong punch followed up instantly by a Dragon Punch. This takes practice but, when perfected, it's devastating.

MASTER COMBO

Jump in with a hard punch and then deliver a Fireball. Then your opponent is almost always suckered into jumping, whereupon you can stun them with the deadly Dragon Punch.

DIRTY TRICKS

1 Force your opponent into the corner and proceed to pound him with missile attacks. He'll have no option but to jump, whereupon you can punish them with the Dragon Punch. For those of you who're repeatedly getting thrashed by this tactic, you best bet is to jump straight up over a Fireball and then try to Fireball your way out.

2 Leave airborne opponents alone until they almost hit you. This may be risky, but a well-timed, last minute Dragon Punch is costly on your opponent's energy bar.

3 When jumping into an opponent, kick them in the chest, not the face, and then sweep. If you kick them in the chest, your opponent can't block and then sweep. Remember, though – you're susceptible to tactic 2.

4 If a fight's going nowhere fast, just try walking up to your opponent and throwing them. You'll be surprised how often this works.

5 Sometimes, instead of jumping in and kicking your opponent in the head, just jump in, land and then throw them. They'll be expecting the kick or punch, and you land slightly sooner if you leave them alone. You're met with your opponent in the blocking stance waiting for you to attack, and you can throw them.

5 Don't forget that any sweep manoeuvres are vulnerable to the Dragon Punch.

Ryu's trying to fireball his way out of trouble, and Ken had better decide to either block it or jump pretty quick, or he'll be flattened.

Ryu finishes Dhalsim off with a well-placed kick in the chops.

ZANGIEF

SPECIAL MOVES

Double Lariat
Spinning Clothesline
Spinning Piledriver

COMBINATION MOVES

Being a big lad, Zangief is incredibly slow, as well as having a rather sad jumping ability. Normally his combos are extremely limited.

COMBO 1

Jump in and kick, following up with a crouch kick and finishing with a Piledriver.

COMBO 2

Body dive followed by a double hit power kick.

COMBO 3

Leap towards the enemy with a fierce punch, then duck and use a strong slap to the stomach. Finish off with a Ducking Roundhouse.

MASTER COMBO

Jump in with a kick, and follow up with a face press. Upon release, move in for the Double Lariat.

NB. These combos are quite sad, but that is as far as Zangief's abilities go. Professional players rely on the incredible grabbing range of the Spinning Piledriver to take out their adversaries.

DIRTY TRICKS

1 The Spinning Piledriver has the best grabbing range available. Use this knowledge to the full. You can grab opponents in mid-kick or even in special moves (eg Blanka's Thunder Storm).

2 Use the Slamdown throw for when you need to defend, and you're in range.

3 The Double Lariat gives you immunity from missile attacks. Master this manoeuvre to give you a chance against opponents such as Guile or Ken.

4 Like all grab attacks, the faster you hit the button, the more energy is depleted.

5 Use grab attacks like the Head Bite, Stomach Pump and Iron Claw as often as you can.

6 Probably the best advice I can give you is not to pick Zangief!

Looks like Dhalsim was too fast for Zangief, who's missed him.

What relation this move has to a clothesline, we've no idea!

Zangief's got Ken in the Spinning Piledriver. Looks like Ken's going to have a bit of a headache when he gets out of that!

CHUN LI

SPECIAL MOVES

Spinning Bird Kick
Hundred Foot Kick

COMBO MOVES

As she's the fastest selectable character, Chun Li's combos tend to be very fast and easy to execute.

She may be a mere slip of a girl, but she can knock Blanka for six.

COMBO 1

Jump in and do a powerful kick followed by a standing weak kick, and then squat with a medium kick.

COMBO 2

Squat weak punch, stand strong punch and then hard kick as you jump forward. If your opponent is not stunned, throw as you land (if possible).

COMBO 3

Jump in with a hard punch, squat with a hard punch and then go for the Spinning Bird Kick.

MASTER COMBO

After a quota of mid-air stomps, land and go straight into a Hundred Foot Kick. Finally, you can either squat hard kick or try a throw if you're feeling daring. If this combo pulls off it will stun immediately.

DIRTY TRICKS

1 Remember: Chun Li possesses some of the best mid-air kicks in the whole game. Use them to full effect.
2 The Spinning Bird Kick can cause damage as Chun Li drops down to come out of the move. Judge the distance and use the appropriate power (weak, medium or strong) to make sure you drop onto your opponent's head.
3 After knocking your opponent down, produce a Hundred Foot Kick to sap a bit more of their strength as they get back on their feet.
4 Using the 'stamp on head' manoeuvre to the full, as many as five hits can be achieved and you can overpower certain of the other characters' special moves.
5 Opponents left lingering in the air after an attack should always be punished with a mid-air throw. Chun Li is one of the only two characters to possess such throws (Guile being the other one).
6 By pinning an enemy against the edge of the screen, it's possible to spring off the wall for a double hit. First, use a Head Stomp and then press for a Roundhouse Kick.

Very undignified, but very effective: Dhalsim's in real trouble from Chun Li's Spinning Bird Kick.

Ryu tries desperately to fend off Chun Li and her vicious Hundred Foot Kick, without much success.

BLANKA

SPECIAL MOVES

Cannonball
Thunderstorm

COMBINATION MOVES

Attacking with combo after combo is a surefire recipe for success due to Blanka's superb speed and accessibility.

Blanka demonstrates a move he picked up from the Ballet Rambert.

COMBO 1

This is dead simple, but highly effective. Use the double-hit knee attack and then hit punch to produce a Neck Bite.

Dhalsim's in for a shock as Blanka produces his special Cannonball.

COMBO 2

Jump in with a hard kick followed up by the Double Head Butt. Use a Cannonball to stun.

COMBO 3

After a Neck Bite in the corner, use the Thunderstorm to fry your opponent as he's released.

COMBO 4

Approach your opponent and use the double-hit Claw Spin. Afterwards, use a low, long-range power punch and finish off with a cannonball.

Come anywhere near Blanka when he's in this electrifying mood, and you'll be shocked out of your skin.

MASTER COMBO

Definitely the best, and also the easiest to execute. Jump in with either powerful punch or medium kick, and follow up with a squatting medium kick and finally a cannonball. That should suffice to put your opponent in a daze.

DIRTY TACTICS

1 Blanka's jumps are very quick. Use this knowledge to take out opponents who have just thrown a Fireball. With a kick or punch you should be quite safe, and not need to worry about such things as last-second Dragon Punches.
2 Vary your Cannonball speeds. By doing this you can trick your enemy into reacting too early, and punish him accordingly.
3 Blanka's flying kick is quite excellent, and can take out many other flying kicks quite efficiently.
4 Don't forget to make full use of Blanka's squatting power punch. As well as being hard it has superb range.

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DHALSIM

SPECIAL MOVES

Yoga Fire
Yoga Flame

COMBINATION MOVES

Dhalsim is mainly a long-range attacker, but he does have a couple of nifty combos up his sleeve.

COMBO 1

Use the Yoga Foot Spear and land a double headbutt on your opponent. This is great for stunning them.

COMBO 2

Use your Yoga Fire and follow up with a long-range power punch. Finally, use your slide technique to catch them off guard. This does take practice, but the slide will reach your opponent, if it's timed correctly. Your opponent thinks it won't be, and so is left vulnerable.

Dhalsim's fiery breath's about to barbecue Ken.

Dhalsim has rather an unfair advantage with his rubber-like limbs.

COMBO 3

As you fall from a jump, use your medium kick. As you land, slide into your opponent and get him in the Headlock.

Dhalsim's really getting hot under the collar, and is going after Ken with his powerful and roasting Yoga Flame.

MASTER COMBO

Fire a slow Yoga Fire and, just before it reaches your opponent, slide into them and then use the Double Headbutt to put them into a daze.

DIRTY TRICKS

1 Use the slide to get past Fireballs if they're giving you problems.
2 Dhalsim is incredibly vulnerable to mid-air throws during a jump, so use the Yoga Foot Spear to reach the ground quicker.
3 Use your medium kicks more than powerful ones. Medium kicks are a lot faster and have a superbly long range during a jump.
4 Coax opponents toward you by beating a hasty retreat. Your opponent should approach you and you can then unexpectedly unleash your Yoga Flame upon them.
5 It may sound silly, but the best way to attack is by backing off. By jumping in you can become vulnerable if a punch or kick fails to meet its target. If you jump away from your opponent you can attack safely without any fear of being hit.

GUILE

SPECIAL MOVES

Somersault Kick
Sonic Boom

COMBINATION MOVES

Possessing above-average power and speed, not to mention incredible versatility, Guile is probably the best character. His Sonic Boom is the fastest missile attack, and his Somersault Kick is second only to the Dragon Punch. Naturally, Guile has all of the best combos, too.

COMBO 1

Jump in with a medium kick, drop down for a medium sweep and finish with a Somersault Kick.

COMBO 2

Throw a slow Sonic Boom and follow it. As it hits your opponent, use a medium sweep, and jump forward with a medium or hard kick. As you land, pound the hard punch button to do the Back Drop.

COMBO 3

Throw a slow Sonic Boom and follow it. As it hits your opponents, do the upside-down kick and then drop down for a Double Foot Sweep.

MASTER COMBO

This is a classic. Jump in with a strong punch after throwing a Sonic Boom, and then drop down for a squatting medium or hard punch (depending on how good player two is). Now throw a Sonic Boom and follow that up with an awesome Clothesline Punch. This is more than enough to send your opponent into unconsciousness.

Guile's Sonic Boom's about to knock the stuffing out of Ken.

Guile's impressive Somersault Kick coupled with a Sonic Boom is about to make mincemeat of Ken, who's trapped in a corner.

DIRTY TRICKS

1 Use the speed of release of your Sonic Boom to punish opponents who are still frozen after throwing a Fireball.
2 Use the shoulder press instead of the air toss, as the former is more powerful.
3 Use small somersault kicks to avoid being kicked in mid-kick, and also to avoid vulnerability to air attacks.
4 Whilst close to your opponent, use an uppercut to fake your vulnerability and then unleash either a Sonic Boom or somersault kick. (Your opponent will be hit in mid punch/kick.)
5 It is possible to perform a Somersault Kick and have it blocked, and then perform another instantly as your opponent goes for the throw.
6 Trap your opponent by using a combination of Sonic Boom and medium kick/punch. Keep shuffling forward to prevent being pushed out of range.
7 Use the crouching block direction on the pad to charge both a Sonic Boom and a Somersault Kick simultaneously. Depending on how your opponent reacts, you can unleash either of these moves without having charged the wrong one.

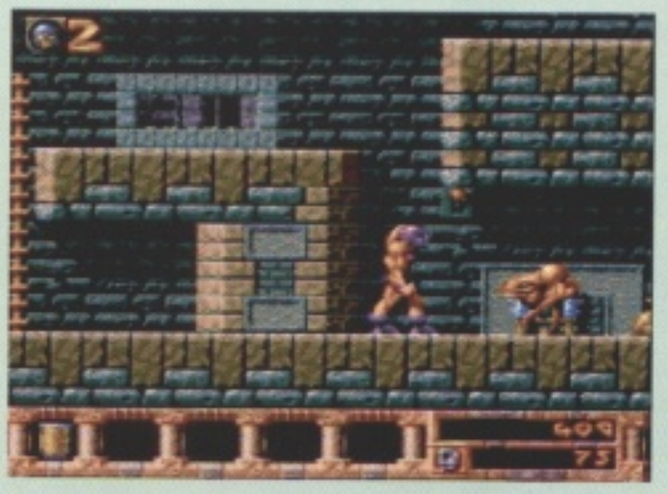
GODS

US/UK Release

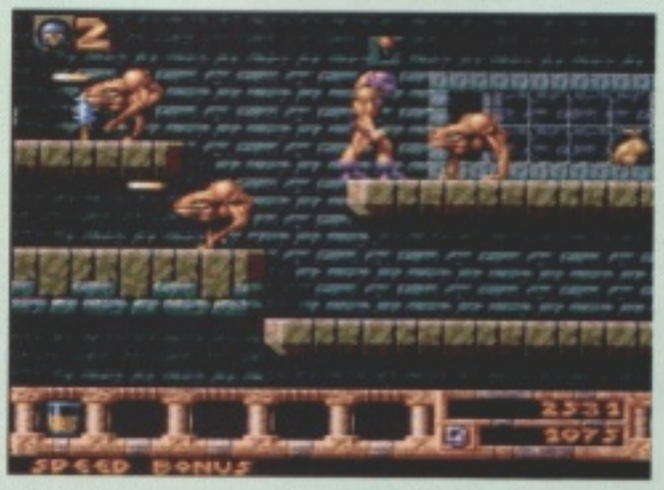
Game: Gods
Publisher: Mindscape
Developer: The Bitmap Brothers
Price: TBA
Release: US: Out now/UK: April
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

TRICKS AND TREATS

If you like, you can just go rampaging through *Gods* slaughtering everyone you meet, and getting to the end of the game as quickly as possible. And that's fine – we've got no problem with it. However, if you want to get the *most* out of the game, you should actually take some time about it, and look around and experiment a bit. Do that and you'll find all kinds of neat stuff lurking just below the surface, waiting for you to find it.

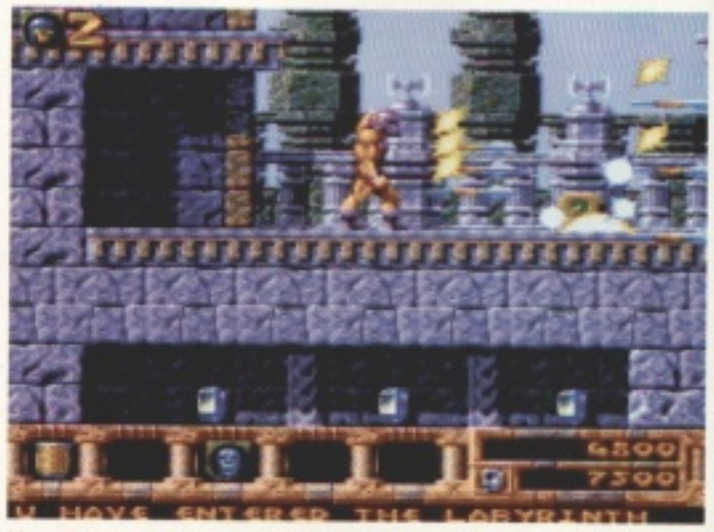


After flicking that switch to get rid of the nasty spiky things in the floor, try being neat and tidy and flicking it back again. (Just do it, all right? It's going to do you some good in a minute, you know.)



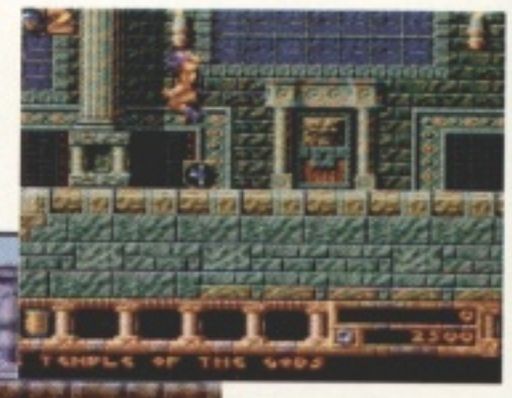
Now blast your way up here and flick that other switch on and off. (While you're doing it, why not take a bit of time out to admire the patented Bitmap Brothers metallic-look graphics?)

'It's a game about me and my family!' exclaimed Matt. 'Even the title's theologically unsound, from a Christian viewpoint,' remarked Jeremy. 'It's one of my favourite ever Amiga games!' cried Stuart Campbell, and ran off with it.



Heavily tooled up, and stomping along purposefully, you wouldn't want to get in the way of this guy, that's for sure.

Here you've reached a temple. Sadly, not a Temple Of Love.



Sometimes, if you're really lucky, you can find a starburst (really groovy smart bomb-type weapon) just lying around for free.

With that amount of protection, this ladder must be going *somewhere* exciting.

Hurrah! You've found a key. Shoot the bad guy who's guarding it, and put it in your pocket (well, inventory pouch) for use a little bit later on.

Then run back over here again. As you reach this point, you should hear a deep rumbling sound, almost like a stone slab being dragged from a wall...

Blimey! A secret passageway is revealed, packed full of goodies! And to think – you wouldn't have known that at all if you hadn't tried a little experimenting.

Brothers

JK: April

rposefully, you
, that's for sure.

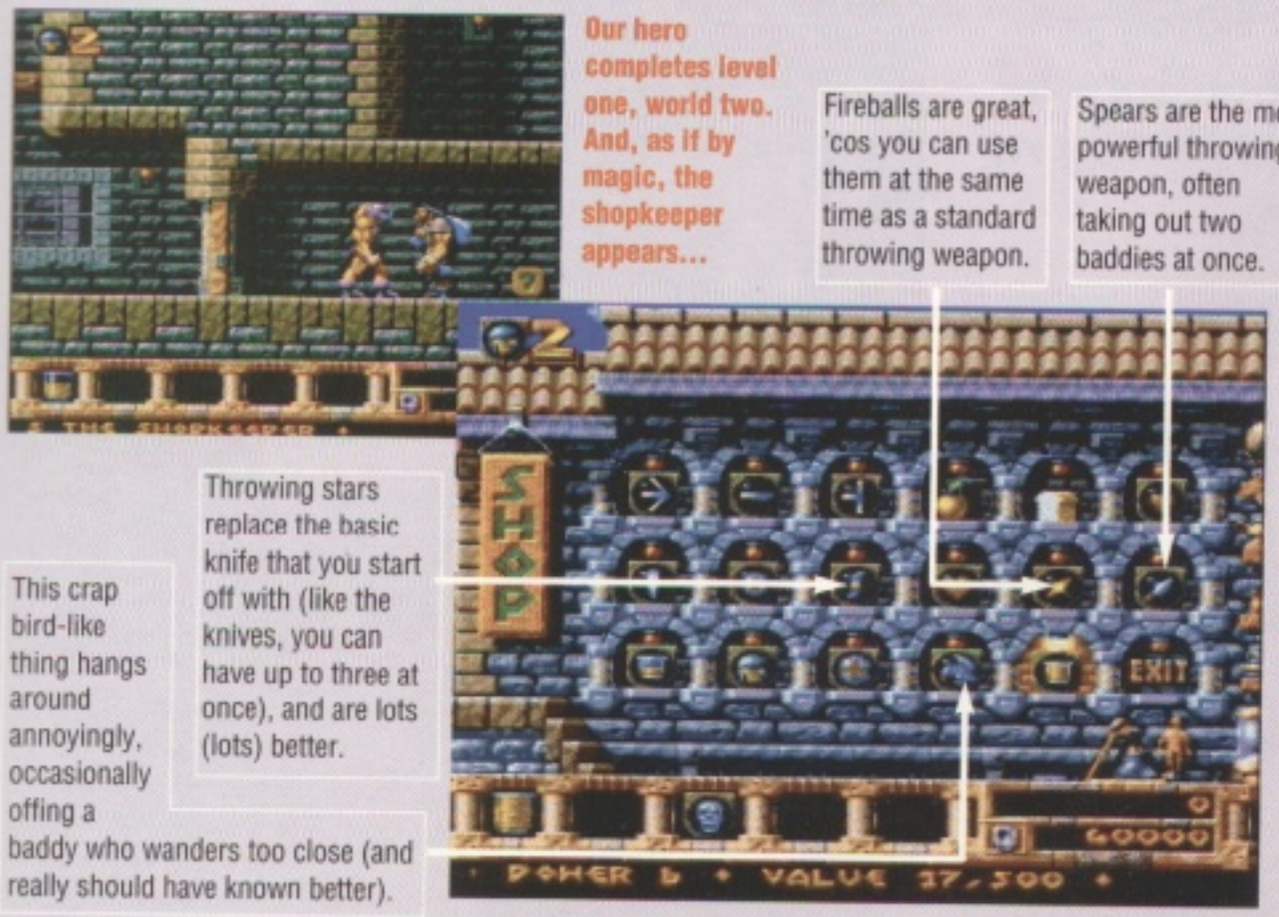
that amount of
ction, this
r must be going
ewhere exciting.

packed full
ave known
henting.

Help! How did I get in here? And, more importantly, how do I get back out again?

As you can see, even when you progress really far into the game, it's still, er, blue.

SHOP TILL YOU DROP



Our hero completes level one, world two. And, as if by magic, the shopkeeper appears...

Fireballs are great, 'cos you can use them at the same time as a standard throwing weapon.

Spears are the most powerful throwing weapon, often taking out two baddies at once.

This crap bird-like thing hangs around annoyingly, occasionally offing a baddy who wanders too close (and really should have known better).

Throwing stars replace the basic knife that you start off with (like the knives, you can have up to three at once), and are lots (lots) better.

WHAT'S THE SCORE?

Here's the high-score table. (Wow!) Note the interesting 'Gods' theme, with entries like 'Apollo', 'Hermes' and 'Aphrodite'.

Then take a look at the high-score name entry screen, and wonder exactly how they managed to get their names up with only three letters and no 'A' or 'O'.

Grab the neat stuff, then pick up the little teleport gem, and, miraculously, you'll find yourself zapped onto the next screen shot, past a mean wave of baddies...

'....and a big set of spikes, and possessed of a tasty points bonus. Keep experimenting like this and there's, ooh, practically no limit to what you can discover.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Where's the music gone? The original two-year-old Amiga game that this is a conversion of boasted an intro tune called *Into The Wonderful*, which was one of the best pieces of computer music in the whole world ever, official. (Source: *Stuart's Big Book Of Really Great Computer Game Tunes.*) When I got this to review I was beside myself with excitement at the prospect of hearing it played by the Super NES's mouthwatering sound chips. But both of me were crushingly disappointed at the feeble blippy rubbish that actually accompanied the title screen when we plugged the cart in and switched the power on. Well, it's not that bad a tune really, but compared to *Into The Wonderful* it's Take That and no mistake.

But never mind, eh? There seems to be a game attached to the intro music, so let's take a look and see if that fares any better.

Gods is a platform shoot-'em-up and some. On the surface it's much the same as any other platform shoot-'em-up, but probe just beneath the, er, blue exterior and you'll find something altogether cleverer. Y'see, *Gods* is full of puzzles. Oh, they're not as obviously puzzley as, say, the ones in *Pushover*, but they're puzzles nonetheless. While playing *Gods*, as well as having to jump gaps and shoot enemies, you'll have to pull switches, discover combinations, manipulate objects, find hidden routes and things like that.

Or rather, you won't. The really interesting thing about *Gods*, you see, is that you can simply play it as a platform game with lots of shooting in it if you prefer, and still have a fair chance of getting to the end. But take the time to get to grips with some of the cleverer bits, and you'll find a whole new dimension there. It wouldn't be far off the mark, indeed, to suggest that you could complete *Gods* without even playing 50% of it. In that respect it's like *Super Mario World*, but other respects in which it's not like *Super Mario World* include the almost complete lack of any real variation in either graphics or gameplay, a character you can't identify with (probably because he hasn't got a face), and, er, the fact that Mario isn't in it. But it's really good anyway. Sort of.

● Stuart Campbell

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
71%	79%	68%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	74%
80%		

VERDICT: *Gods* has a very different feel to most SNES platform games, and that's no bad thing. It's got a lot more depth, too, but the gameplay's so repetitive you might get bored before you explore the many subtly-hidden features. Stick with it, though, and this'll last you ages.

Thanks to Krazy Konsoles, (0422) 342901, for the loan of *Gods*.

KING ARTHUR'S WORLD

Excalibur, the Holy Grail, Guinevere, Lancelot, the Lady of the Lake, Camelot, the Round Table – you won't find any of them in *King Arthur's World*. What you will find, though, are enemy soldiers by the barrack-full, asking, nay, *begging* to be hacked to pieces.

It's *King Arthur's World*! Hack, slash, burn, charge, clamber, and, er, walk through 30 levels of enemy fortifications, collecting as much gold as you can on the way. It's just a tiny bit like *Lemmings* (we don't mince our words here at *Super Play*), in that you're trying to keep your eye on lots of different characters at once, each of whom has a different range of abilities.

This is King Arthur. If he get killed, thunder clouds will roll across the sky, the kingdom will be plunged into chaos, millions will be left at the mercy of the forces of evil and – worst of all – you'll have to start the level again from scratch. He's pretty tough, though, and will happily take on 20 or so enemy knights.

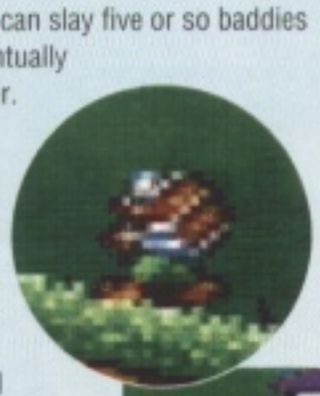
Your objective on each level is to get the king safely to the, er, objective. On the training levels it's a treasure chest, and later you'll be hunting down other kings and goodness knows what else.

You start off each level at your base camp. As the levels get more involved (and lengthy), you'll be able to move your camp closer to the action. The advantage of this is that your troops (see below) emerge from here, and the shorter their walk to the battlefield, the better for all concerned.

By jiggling around with all manner of icons (a small selection of which are shown here), it's your job to mobilise your army and set them conquering the enemy kingdom. You've got a variety of troops at your disposal, and you're given a fixed number of each on each level – usually just enough to get the job done, with a few in reserve in case of accidents. Once they've done their job they head for home and – if they make it alive – you can use them again.

HOLY GRAILS, BATMAN! IT'S LIKE THERE'S A WHOLE ARMY OUT THERE!

Knights are your basic 'arrow-fodder', and are the only chaps who stand any chance in a head-to-head fight. They can slay five or so baddies before eventually keeling over.



Barrelmen carry round barrels full of explosives – handy for blowing open doors, or getting rid of the spiky crusher things you'll occasionally encounter. They tend to be a bit vulnerable to enemy fire, though.

Engineers do all the jobs no-one else wants to do, like building bridges and ladders, shifting your base camp, battering down doors and setting up fire-throwing catapults. Their modern equivalent would probably be the 'staff writer'.

Position a soldier between the enemy in a sensitive operation and they'll provide a few seconds grace before caving in.It can't be fun, being a soldier, but that's war for you.

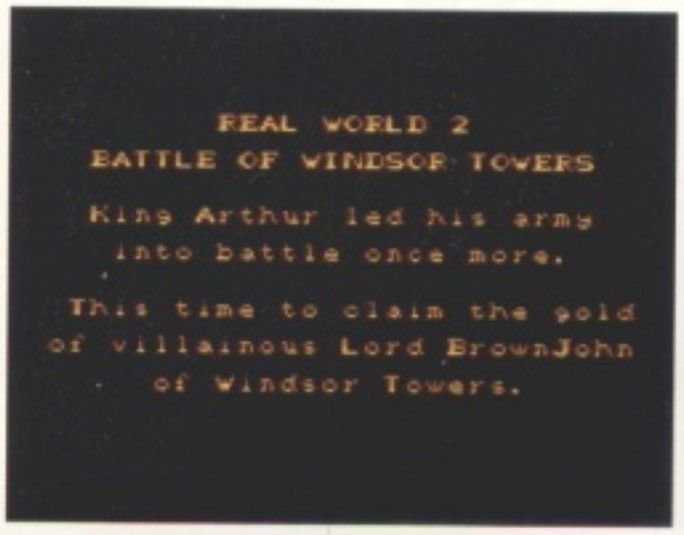
There are two sorts of wizard: nice ones, that top up your men's strength, or make them invulnerable for a bit; and nasty ones, which can rain down fire on the enemy, or control their minds, or cast any number of other despicable spells on your opponents. They tend to be in short supply, though, and can only cast each spell a fixed number of times. Apart from that, they're great.

And here's an example of a soldier in action. He's bravely holding back the tide of enemy knights while your archers shoot them all with their bows and arrows. You'll need to do lots of strategic thinking like this.

Engineers, doing their catapult bit.

UK Release

Game: King Arthur's World
Publisher: Jaleco
Developer: Argonaut
Price: £44.99
Release: May
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 4 Mbit


REAL WORLD 2
BATTLE OF WINDSOR TOWERS
King Arthur led his army into battle once more.
This time to claim the gold of villainous Lord BrownJohn of Windsor Towers.

Above: The game's got 23 levels altogether, including the short training ones, and before each one you're told what your objective is (in a rather approximate way). A password is provided each time you complete a level, although 'completing a level' can be a lengthy process.

Left: Piles of gold can be picked up for extra points. In fact, there's one now. DON'T DO IT, though. This particular pile is part of a booby trap!

Right: These gigantic super-knights take a fair amount of battering – in fact it's generally best to send a wizard after them.

Quite a lot of the game takes place underground. Like here, for example.

Above: Here's a fine example of Arthurian architecture. The green flag next to it is one of the spots you can move your base camp to if you want.

Left: We were going to show you one of the game's lethal spiky crusher things, but we decided it was too lethal to live, and blew it up in this smashing explosion.

Above: Like it says, King Arthur and his troops celebrate another victory of good over evil.

Left: It *was* a terrific explosion, wasn't it?

ALL ABOUT ARTHUR

King Arthur was a pretty amazing guy. Here are five incredible King Arthur facts:

1) He managed to pull out a sword that was stuck in a stone, and everyone was so impressed they crowned him king.
2) As soon as he'd been made king, he had a special round table installed in his castle. This was so he could stage authentic Chinese banquets for his knights.
3) His wife was called Guinevere. But she ran off with Sir Lancelot, because he had a nicer smile.
4) He once thought he'd found the Holy Grail, but it turned out to be Sir Gawain's darts trophy.
5) Er...

(*You're fired – Ed.*)

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

At first glance, *King Arthur's World* honestly doesn't look like anything special. The idea's really exciting and everything – laying siege to castles, hacking through enemy armies, nicking treasure – but the graphics aren't too special, the way the levels are laid out isn't very inspiring, and it all looks horribly like a *Lemmings* clone.

Its case isn't helped by its awful control system. I don't know how they've done it, but even after I'd been playing the game all day, I still kept pressing the wrong buttons all the time, and frequently found myself just pressing everything in the hope of achieving the effect I was after. True, the game's a complicated one, and you've got loads of available options at any one time, but surely they could have come up with something better than this. (A mouse improves things a bit, but who's got one of those?) It's not just the way the buttons are organised, either. There are lots of silly design flaws. For example, as soon as you press 'A' to make a soldier drop his bomb, or build his bridge, or whatever, the view immediately zips back to wherever the king's standing, meaning that a) you can't actually see what happens, and b) your soldier usually gets killed as he's trekking back to base.

But, although I'd be lying if I said it was possible to get used to all this constant hassle, you *do* learn to live with it (albeit grudgingly). So I'll stop whinging now, and tell you how good the game is.

And it *is* really good. It's paced just about right. It's full of well-thought-out puzzles. It's got a definite medieval feel to it (even if it does skimp on the Arthurian legends a bit). Although the graphics generally aren't too hot, there are lots of neat bits, including some nice explosions. It introduces new elements gradually, so it doesn't get repetitive. And it's got that essential get-slightly-further-each-time-you-play quality (helped, of course, by the provision of passwords).

In fact, in many ways I think I prefer this to *Lemmings*. With *Lemmings* you know where you stand, and just what you've got to do, at the beginning of each level. *King Arthur's World* has got more of an 'exploration' feel to it – something I always like in a game. It's also much easier to relate to little chaps in armour than horrible blue things with green hair.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
74%	60%	80%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
86%		83%

VERDICT: The controls are a total nightmare, and the presentation isn't great, but otherwise this is an absorbing and extremely addictive little game. Keep an eye out for it.

CHESTER CHEETAH

'I don't believe this – it's a game based on a crispy cheese snack!' remarked Jason, before plopping *Chester Cheetah* into our Super Nintendo's cart slot. 'That's as bad as a game based on Vanna White.' Well, almost...

Japanese Release

Game: Chester Cheetah
Publisher: Kaneko
Developer: In-house
Price: £45-£50
Release: Out now
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

These underground bits are often just dead ends, but at least there're always lots of Cheetos Paws™ – his favourite snack – for you to collect.

The driver of this steamroller looks just like Mutley from *Wacky Races*. Now, a game based around him *would* be fab.

Level two is even more sickeningly colourful than level one. The gameplay picks up a bit here, but it never presents enough problems to provide much of a challenge.

I couldn't quite work out what this contraption was supposed to be. Walk under its legs and it disappears.

Above: These hippo's will help you across the water – use the crocodiles as stepping stones.

Chester enjoys a few moments of invincibility with the aid of this magic guitar. His side-kick, a monkey-type character, helps out too, grabbing items that're out of reach...

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

For the uninitiated, Cheetos are a brand of American cheesy puff snacks that taste a bit like Wotsits. In other words, they're pretty disgusting, and I'll try and mention them as few times as possible.

It's lucky, then, that it's not Cheetos themselves that are on trial here, but a game based on the product's mascot – the 'famous' Chester Cheetah. He's like a spotted version of the Pink Panther, and a bit of a cool dude, while the game design Kaneko have selected for him is the inevitable platform thing – a dodgy choice, as the competition is so strong Chester's creators would have to perform miracles just to get him noticed.

It's clear that Kaneko *haven't* managed to perform any miracles here, though this is a fairly decent little game. The guys have certainly tried hard with it – sometimes a bit too hard, particularly with the graphics. The game's intensely colourful, but it's in a sickly 'My Little Pony' kind of way, which is only likely to appeal to young children. (I suspect our hero would have earned himself more street cred if he'd been treated to a slightly less lurid colour scheme.)

Unfortunately, however, the gameplay is fairly stale – it's just too slow and predictable to be very much fun to play. Sure, there are a few bright spots – the bits where Chester really struts his stuff, swinging on ropes and things – but they're few and far between. The game's also fairly small – I've a feeling these six levels won't last you very long at all. It can be frustrating too, with more than its fair share of odd, or simply lazy, gameplay elements. It all adds up to a fair-to-middling release, then – not bad, as such, but nowhere near good enough when you think that it's up against such tempting classics as *Prince Of Persia*, *Mickey Mouse* and *Super Mario World*. Super Nintendo platform games have become too good for this to carve itself much of a place in our affections. Younger players will appreciate the humour and colour, but for the rest of us, it's best left on the shelf.

● Jason Brookes

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
73%	58%	57%
GAMELIFE	**OVERALL SCORE:**	
60%		58%

VERDICT: Over-colourful graphics will please the kids, but this is no star in the gameplay department. It's just too slow and plodding.

Thanks to Tele Games, (0533) 880445, for lending us this cart.

ALIENS VS PREDATOR

Japanese Release

Game: Aliens vs Predator
Publisher: IGS
Developer: In-house
Price: £45-£50
Release: Out now
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

Brilliant idea, isn't it? The *Aliens vs Predator* concept made for a fabulous comic, and will soon (it's said) be appearing as a film too. But, the chance to make a top-notch game of the thing seems to have slipped through IGS's fingers...

Level one takes place in a damp, sewer-like area. You, of course, play the Predator. The Aliens you come across are softer than you'd expect – they can be punched, kicked or zapped without too much trouble.

Anyone who's played *Golden Axe* on the Mega Drive won't have any problems executing this move – it's exactly the same, just two stabs on the directional pad, combined with a punch.

See this big green and orange thing? That's your mum, that is. (*Sorry – Ed.*) Yes, the small brown thing at the Alien's feet is a baby Alien – a face hugger. These can be as much of a pain as the bigger guys, so you'll need to take 'em out fast with a sliding kick.

For the first few goes this end-of-level one guard will probably make mincemeat of your Predator. You can't easily avoid getting hit, so make sure you've got plenty of power ups before you take him on. (If you're actually bothered about the Predator surviving at all, that is.)

Snow joke on level two (*You're sacked – Ed*), which is a scroll down an icy cliff face. I couldn't get past the boss at the end at all (another Alien, much like the one at the end of level one) on difficult mode, but luckily the game gives you an option screen so you can switch to 'easy'.

What do you do when you get bored of hunting humans? If you're a Predator, you'll go after even tougher prey – in this case, Aliens! The year is 2493, the planet is Ryushi, and here's the intro bit...

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

ALIENS VS PREDATOR

I'm afraid every doubt I had about the sort of conversion *Aliens vs Predator* would receive have been confirmed. It's a dog of a game. Doing a beat-'em-up is always risky, the limited scope of the genre making it far too easy to turn out a very average product – good programmers and designers are needed to inject new ideas and interesting gameplay.

Unfortunately these are two things *Aliens vs Predator* just doesn't have – if there's a single original idea here, I didn't see it. The other big thing it lacks is any real sense of purpose to the action – you don't get to know why this Predator is going after the Aliens. It all adds up to a game where the execution of the fighting moves is the only thing it could possibly have going for it, but oh no, it falls down here too. The punching feels weak, the graphics are only average, and frustration sets in so regularly that after about half an hour's play, I wanted to go to the pub. The concept of the game is great, but, let's face it, walking along a horizontally scrolling screen and repeatedly pressing the same button is plain boring, no matter who the sprites are.

All in all, then, *Aliens vs Predator* is a truly disastrous game. Avoid.

● Jason Brookes

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
65%	52%	28%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
24%		28%

VERDICT: Not quite in the same dire league as *Pitfighter* and it's motley chums, but severely lacking all the same. Don't buy it. The name is probably the best thing about the whole sorry project.

Thanks to Krazy Konsoles, (0422) 342901, for lending us this cart.

SOUL BLAZER

SUPER PLAYER'S GUIDE

ENIX (JAP/US)

By Allan Brett
Assisted by Rich Pelly

Soul Blazer **hasn't actually come out officially in the UK yet, although a release in the near future seems likely. The thing is, though, we've had so many enquiries from people playing import versions of the game (both the American and the Japanese one, known as *Soul Blader*) that, if only for our own peace, we thought a complete player's guide might be in order. It's been compiled by National Computer Games Championships 1992 winner Allan Brett, and it'll take you through the whole game from start to finish.**

As you may already have realised, this game's split up into five different stages, which are followed by a potentially life-threatening foray into the Dark World and the final conflict. I'll tell you exactly where to go and what to do in each of the stages, making sure you don't miss any important bits. First, however, take note of one or two things that apply to the game as a whole...

General tips

- Try to hit the enemy with the end of your sword swing. You'll do a lot more damage this way.
- Don't go rushing around chasing the enemy. Instead, play it cool and position yourself behind a wall and let the enemy approach you.
- Stay away from bases until they're deactivated.
- Don't bust a gut trying to retrieve any of the gems.
- Try not to get in front of missile-firing enemies.
- On most areas, a new piece of armour or a new sword can be found. Don't confront the bosses without them.
- Experiment with different types of magic and find which works best in different situations.
- If you run out of medical herbs, check how many monster lairs remain and work out whether you'll need to get another.
- Always wear a bracelet.
- Don't rush from one zone to another; take your time to gain experience to increase your strength.

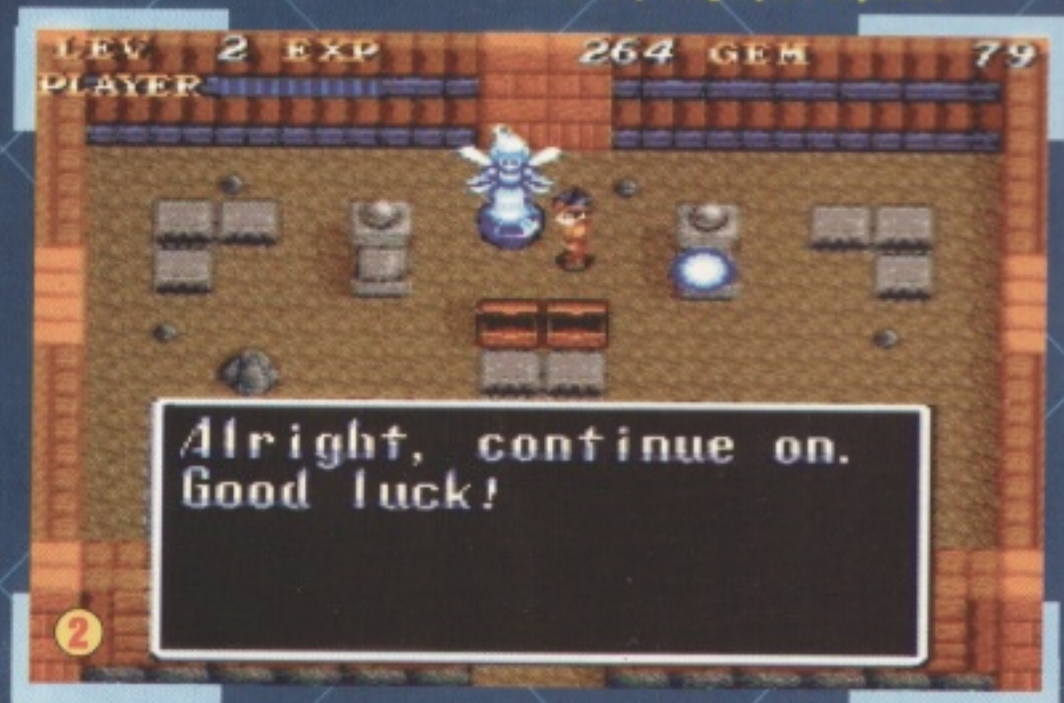
GRASS VALLEY

UNDERGROUND CASTLE

1 a) In the Underground Castle (West) you'll need to return to the watermill and turn the wheel. Upon exiting the mill, go straight down and,
2 using the ivy, go into the cave to collect iron armour and other booty.

1

Flattery will get you everywhere!



2

Well, thank you kindly – how polite they are in this game!

3

You'll get a lift from this bit. (Groan!)

Return to the underground elevator to
3 destroy the last lair, then proceed to Underground Castle (East).

b) To destroy the last base in Underground Castle (East), use the dream rod to enter Lisa's Dream. A gate in the Underground Castle (East) will open. Return here and collect Leo's Brush from the chest. Then, return to Lisa.

LISA'S HOUSE

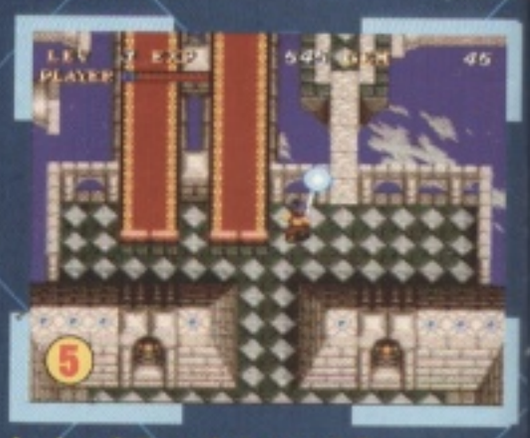
4 Lisa reads you a note. Go to the top of the stairs where the architect stands. Use the Brush to enter the painting – the second bit of this stage.

4

Halfway up the stairs is th...(*Cut – Ed.*)

LEO'S PAINTING

5 The Zantetsu Sword's here. Don't worry about undestroyable bases.



5

Leo's painting what, exactly?

THE BOSS

6 He's fairly simple. Only use the middle treadmill, though. Entice the boss to the left or right of the screen, then dart up the middle treadmill, score a few hits and retreat. Repeat this until he's dead.

Afterwards, return to the Chief's House to collect the Key Stone. Then proceed to Greenwood.

6

The boss is big, but very easy to kill.

You don't have to be mad to star in a Japanese RPG, but it helps!

GREENWOOD

WATER SHRINE

As soon as you get the delicious seeds, (1) return to the squirrel to obtain the Psycho Sword.

FIRE SHRINE

A couple of lairs can't be destroyed until you have the Zantetsu Sword, and you'll need the company of a mole to reveal some of the other ones. Before you proceed to the Light Shrine you must return to Greenwood. Speak with the moles – try the first burrow you find – and you'll discover some leaves underneath Turbo's bones. A sleeping bird holds the key to their retrieval.

Also, make sure you obtain one of the Master's Emblems, not to mention the Ice Armour. The latter is obtained by (2) entering the Dream of a Sleeping Stump and going behind the tree on the right of the bird. Now you can reach the chest containing the Ice Armour.

An native of Fangorn, perhaps?

LIGHT SHRINE

(3) Again, some lairs are invincible until you possess the Spirit Sword. Remember to get the Light Soul too!

Throw a little light on the situation (*I thought I sacked you earlier this issue – Ed.*) in the Light Shrine.

THE BOSS

The first head is the 'light' head. It's easily killed by simply standing and slashing it to bits as it goes around you.

The second head is harder, but still poses no threat to a hardened gamester. Stand in the middle of his path as he circles you and slash him till he dies. The last head is the fire head, and is deadly if tackled wrongly. The best way is to wait till it stops to spew a fire stream, then quickly attack and retreat. Stay out of his way until he stops again, and then do the same thing again.

I am a mole and I live in a hole.. (*Whoever wrote these captions is fired – Ed.*)

Upon returning to Greenwood you must:

(4) • Get Monmo to her hole (the third to the right) and she will give you her ribbon. Give this to the mole down the hole to the left and talk to the mole below in exchange for a shield bracelet.
• Get the goat across the Crocodile Bridge. The goat will release a fairy jewel of great importance for later on.
• Go to the forest guardian and obtain another Key Stone. Then go to St Elles.

This is Greenwood in all its glory.

ST ELLES

Begin by talking to the shrine above your point of arrival, and then head back and use the newly-appeared Warp Square to get to the first island.

Collect this very useful Bubble Armour from the palace.

ISLAND 1

Fairly simple stuff, except that one base is unreachable. By going back to St Elles you can enter the palace at the bottom

Make like the Man From Atlantis.

to collect the Bubble Armour. Then go down to enter the Coral Reef. When (1) there, head left and you'll find some steps which will lead you to the monster lair you couldn't previously get to.

ISLAND 2

After the newly-appeared statue has opened a path for you, head to Island 2. (2) The various ponds are drained by destroying certain monster lairs, or opening up more lairs.

Rain Island won't pose you too many problems.

ISLAND 3

Make sure you have the soul that stops the lava around you from hurting you. By this point you should possess the Mermaid Tears, which should be used at the top of the mountain to stop the lava flow. One lair cannot be destroyed until later on, so leave them, but don't forget to collect the Critical Sword from the chest on the way down.

ISLAND 4

(3) This Rain Island is fairly straightforward. Make sure you have the Thunder Ring, as you need it to destroy some monsters at the top of the island.

The fourth statue will now appear, leading to the Ghost Ship. Don't forget to visit the two sleeping dolphins and to collect another Emblem. The Ghost Ship itself is pretty easy, and only the boss should pose any threat.

THE BOSS

Quite a tough cookie, this one. The trick is to swipe at and destroy one of the hands that go for you. The skull should come down, whereupon you can take a few swipes at it. Quickly back off before it hits you, as it darts across and retreats to its original position. Try to dispose of the hands as quickly as possible, as they spell certain death for the careless.

Once the boss is dead, return to St Elles to see the queen and get another key stone. Head to the Mountain Of Souls.

Work out where to go next with this map of St Elles.

MOUNTAIN OF SOULS

Straight away, go to the outside and start killing monsters. Watch out for snowballs. One of the lairs will reveal the Lucky Blade and other booty when you get inside the second part of the mountain and start sliding. Return to the mountain for some special shoes.

Inside the second part of the mountain, you should keep going until you can't reach the final few lairs.

Also, look out for invisible ice bridges which flicker on and off periodically. The thing to do is to return to the Mountain Of Souls and find another entrance to the ice cave you've just visited to get to the remaining monster lairs. After you've finished the ice cave you'll reach a new area which, if you destroy some lairs, will lead you to previously inaccessible lairs. (Oh, and find the magic armour.)

Ice to see you, to see you... (*Snip! – Ed.*)

It's no use hiding! I can see you!

In the Mountain Of Souls a sleeping plant's dream opens up a new path in the final area, and a Master's Emblem lies where the plant once stood.

THE BOSS

He's well hard. There's no sound advice, unfortunately, but by trying to avoid his bullets and inflicting as much damage as possible (don't worry about being hit by the fork) you should get away with it. One hint: as he fires his two bullets, move down and they should miss.

After the death of the boss, return to the mountain and obtain a Key Stone, whereupon you should proceed to Dr Leo's House.

DR LEO'S HOUSE

First, find you way to the first dungeon basement. As soon as you release a great door, return and get the Zantetsu Sword (you'll need the Ice Armour). With this you can finish the lairs off in the dungeon basement, and you may now destroy the lairs in earlier levels that were previously untouchable. Before you return, though, finish Dr Leo's House. Head upstairs and go to the Model Town.

MODEL TOWN 1

As soon as a great door is released, return to it and get a soul (the invisible monster's soul, actually). Clear the Model Town of bases/lairs.

MODEL TOWN 2

No special tricks here – it's all pretty straightforward. Keep your eyes peeled, though, as treasure chests are often cunningly hidden among the houses.

ABOUT THE HOUSE

The plant near to the Model Towns has leaves which you can use to lure the cats out of the room where the mouse

Three onto one? Any time, any time...

I hope you wiped you feet first.

is. Go into the mousehole and get some new magic. Now go downstairs and find a new staircase which leads to a second dungeon basement, and the boss.

THE BOSS

Dead easy. When it stops, close in and slash it when it's fired its missile. Then run around to avoid the dropping bombs. Repeat this and it should die swiftly.

Afterwards, find Marie the Doll to get another Keystone. Then return to Grass Valley and enter Leo's Painting, where a few lairs still remain – destroy them. When you return to Grass Valley you'll be able to get a Master's Emblem and the Recovery Sword, but I'm not going to spoil everything so you can find them yourself! Now go to Greenwood, and find and destroy the remaining lairs (except the ones in the Light Shrine). Do the same in St Elles and the Mountain Of Souls. Now head for Magridd Castle.

MAGRIDD CASTLE

Finding the dungeon is easy, but, once in the Torture Chamber, check all skeletons for the Harp String, especially the one at the top right. After finding the Spirit Sword, and clearing the dungeon of lairs, exit and go to Greenwood.

GREENWOOD

Return to the Light Shrine and kill the monsters with your Spirit Sword. In Greenwood you'll be able to get hold of a red-hot item from a little bird.

BACK AT MAGRIDD CASTLE

The Harp String makes the musician play, which entices a soldier to the front row. You'll find a VIP card where he was standing, which accesses the left tower. First, the false wall soul reveals secret passages. Go to the torture chamber and previous dungeons in Magridd and look for the passages and treasure chests. In Magridd Castle Grounds, a sleeping soldier has some Elemental Mail.

THE LEFT TOWER

If you have the Soul Of Reality you'll have no problems. Don't forget to collect the treasure in the prison area.

Back in the Castle Grounds you may find that the queen has gone, leaving a Platinum Card behind which gives access to the Right Tower.

The dungeon is easy, the climax is fab, but the boss is hard. Use the mobile key to start the ship and face the boss.

THE BOSS

Take your time with this boss. Stay in front of the cabin to avoid being blown to the back of the deck. To beat the boss, wait for it to swoop. Then, if you're standing to one side of the cabin you can hit it safely, but when it produces fire streams from the top of the screen you should wait for it to fire. Then move to the opposite side of the cabin, making a large gap between the streams to save you from sustaining damage. Be patient and you'll be okay.

KING MAGRIDD

The king will now come to his senses and give you the final Key Stone to open up the gate to the Dark World.

But beforehand... You should have one red-hot item; another waits for you in the Dark World. As for the last one, you can find it yourself!

The eight Master's Emblems allow you to use magic without gems. Here are the locations of six – with some hints.

1. Grass Valley – Climb some ivy to reach a small ledge.
2. Greenwood – A lodger in the sword-bearing squirrel's house has the goods.
3. St Elles – Search the coral reef well.
4. Mountain Of Souls – A room with no door containing a snail. (Use the light.)
5. Mountain Of Souls – The position of a sleeping plant hides the goods.
6. Outside Castle Magridd – By the wall.

DARK WORLD

Collect the final red-hot item, then visit the king in the Mountain Of Souls who gives you the phoenix magic you'll need to kill Deathtoll, whose palace appears.

Don't forget to find the Soul Blade and the Soul Armour before confronting Deathtoll. The actual monsters bit beforehand is pretty standard stuff.

THE FINAL CONFLICT

In his first form, Deathtoll's a wimp. In his second form, he's still a wimp (provided you have all eight of the Master's Emblems – if not he's harder). Running out of gems is a big worry as you need the Phoenix Magic to kill him. Don't waste gems and be careful when he open his mouth. (Don't get in front of it.) With a bit of luck you'll be able to sit back and watch the end sequence now.

Hello everyone, and welcome to Butlins Transylvania! We hope you enjoy your stay.

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LETHAL WEAPON

UK Release

Game: Lethal Weapon
Publisher: Ocean
Developer: In-house
Price: £44.99
Release: March
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

Ocean's *Lethal Weapon* game kills three birds with one stone, as it straddles the films *Lethal Weapon*, *Lethal Weapon 2* and *Lethal Weapon 3* all in one go.

The films centre around two main characters. There's Murtaugh, Danny Glover's character – the play-it-safe family man. And then there's his partner Riggs, Mel Gibson's character – tough, joky, refuses to play it by the book etc.

At the game's heart is the police station, which consists of two floors and five doors. Each door has one of the game's missions behind it, and you can go through any of the first four you like. This is great, because if you get stuck on mission one you can say: Blow it, I'll go and have a crack at mission two instead. And if things don't turn out too well there either, you can try mission three instead. And if that... (*They get the idea – Ed.*)

Mission four is Lifts-And-Moving-Platforms City, so precision jumping skills are called for.

WE HAVE RECEIVED A THREAT OF A
TERRORIST BOMB PLANTED IN A
MERRBY SHOPPING MALL.
TERRORISTS HAVE BEEN TRAPPED
INSIDE BE CAREFUL!

This is a shopping mall, believe it or not, the setting for mission three. Work your way around it, dodging flame throwers, and trying to come to terms with Mel's odd habit of suddenly jumping down ventilation shafts for no apparent reason.

Mission five is out of bounds until you've completed missions one to four. Sorry.

The lift is quite amusing. You can only go 'up' in it. If you want to go 'down', you have to jump down the lift shaft.

Walk off the screen here and you can switch between Mel Gibson and Danny Glover. The significance of the messages that appear when you do so escapes us.

This water dispenser doesn't actually do anything. It's just there for decoration. So are all the plants, in fact. And the chairs. And the filing cabinets and the desks.

EMERGENCY! WE HAVE RECEIVED A
THREAT THAT UNLESS THE CITY
PAYS $10 MILLION BY MIDNIGHT.
A SERIES OF BOMBS PLANTED IN
THE CITY'S SEWERS WILL DETONATE
CRUSHING BILLIONS OF DOLLARS OF
ORGANISATIONS
AND PREVENT THEM FROM CARRYING
OUT THIS ACT!

In mission one you're clambering round a dockyard/building site-type place looking for smugglers. One false move and you'll find yourself in the shark infested waters beneath, facing the prospect of a long climb back up again.

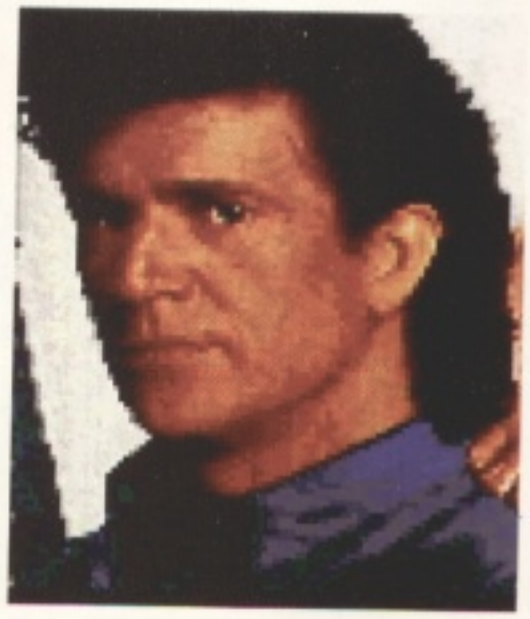
It's down into the crocodile infested sewers for mission two, where you'll be hopping from platform to platform while shooting baddies (a theme common to all the missions, in fact). Watch out for deadly spikes, which pop up from the floor without warning.

We could call one crocodile Snap, and the other one Crackle. Then we could find another one and call it Pop...

Pressing the B button allows you to dislocate Mel's shoulder – just like in the films. (*No it doesn't – Ed.*)

Flame throwers are among the more deadly enemy weapons. There's one right there, in fact.

LOOK-A-NOTHING LIKE



Lethal Weapon's central character.

Mel Gibson.

Have any of our readers noticed the remarkable lack of any similarity between Mel Gibson (star of the film *Lethal Weapon*) and the central character in Ocean's *Lethal Weapon* game? Are they by any chance not related?

(Actually folks, when Ocean bought the *Lethal Weapon* licence they obtained the rights to use photos of people from the film – hence all the digitised stills that keep appearing through the game – but not the right to create their own likenesses of any of the characters. That's why the little chap you control doesn't look much like Mel or Danny.)

While most of the levels seem to go on for ages without really changing much, mission three suddenly turns into this – a shopping mall. You've got to run up and down staircases, picking off balaclava-ed gun men (which there are loads of). You can't go into the shops though. *(A bit of a shame, that – Lisa)*

In *Prince Of Persia*, if you stepped onto a wobbly platform you'd be all right if you stepped off it again quickly enough. Step onto one in *Lethal Weapon* (that's one on the floor just there, in fact), and Riggs will freeze and wait for the platform to collapse, taking him with it. We're not quite sure why.

IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS...

While *Lethal Weapon* has, by and large, been competently put together, there are millions of irritating little flaws in it which can really grind a player down. In isolation, you probably wouldn't be all that bothered by any of them, but when you get about three happening to you at once, it makes you want to scream. Or break something. Here are some examples...

We're working our way down through the playing area. We need to jump onto the platform beneath – which is off the bottom of the screen, so we can't see it. Nnngh.

In most games you can tell if a spike's about to shoot up under you, as the tip of the spike sticks out a bit. But here they just pop up out of nowhere and kill you. Grr.

So you can't shoot people when you're standing on a ladder? Why not? Eh?

The collision detection dictates that you can only grab hold of the middle of a girder. You just drop through it if you aim for the ends, and fall right back to the start.

Try to walk past one of these vent things and, without any provocation from you, Mel jumps in and tumbles back down several storeys. But why?

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

There are many aspects of *Lethal Weapon* which, although they'd normally drive a reviewer to despair, I'm really not that bothered about. It doesn't worry me, for example, that it takes the unadventurous platform shoot-'em-up approach – the sort of thing that used to be the norm for film licences until software companies started receiving threats of violence from disaffected games players. No – I'm easy.

I don't particularly care, either, that the sprites are a bit titchy. After all, it means more detail can be packed into each screen. Nor am I that bothered that the graphics generally aren't too great. While pretty pictures are always a bonus, in an action game like this you ought to be concentrating on staying alive, not admiring the scenery.

In fact there are lots of things about the game that I quite like. I like the way it's laid out – the way you can do the first four missions in any order you want. I like the down-to-earth idea behind the thing. And the difficulty level is about right, giving the game a more-ish, get-slightly-further-each-time-you-play quality.

But the trouble is, in the long run all these nice bits get utterly swamped by a whole host of niggling flaws. Here's a selection: the utterly unconvincing attempt to simulate inertia on Mel Gibson; the dull front-end screens; the completely thick baddies who wander around everywhere shooting at random; the lack of any tangible attempt to improve on the Amiga version – in fact, in many ways it's worse; the fact that, although the sprites are really tiny, there *isn't* actually any more detail than would be possible if they were a bit meatier. And there are many more where those came from.

And then there's the biggie, the... the... whatever the opposite of a *coup de grâce* is. The trouble is that the gameplay relies far too heavily on the idea of trying to work you way up to the top of a set of platforms, with the ever-present danger of missing your footing, plunging all the way back to the bottom and having to start again. That sort of thing is okay in moderation, but when it's the basis of a whole game it makes you wonder.

So I'm afraid I really can't recommend *Lethal Weapon*. It's got its good points, but they're more than outweighed by its bad points. Simple as that.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
60%	60%	55%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
66%		57%

VERDICT: Sort of alrightish. But it's the same old story – there are lots of much better games than this around for the money.

STAR WARS

SUPER PLAYER'S GUIDE

JVC (US/JAP)

By Allan Brett

Super Star Wars **is 'one of the best – if not *the* best – film-based games ever', to quote our review in issue 4, and save ourselves the trouble of coming up with a new sound-bite. It really is splendid, and boasts oodles of solid playability underneath the flashy visuals and fabulous soundtrack. A player's guide, then, was on the cards from the start. And here it is. Bear in mind that the guide's been put together by Allan Brett, who's officially the best games player in Britain. He tends to scatter words like 'easy' around quite liberally. Mentally substitute them with things like 'nail-bitingly difficult' or 'positively scary' and the picture should become clearer.**

The game is divided up into 15 levels, which roughly correspond to the major scenes of the film. The vast majority of them involve hopping from platform to platform and leaping over ravines. One or two see you whizzing about millimetres off the ground in various pieces of Jedi hardware. All bombard you with baddies large and small. But, as with all great Super Nintendo platform games, there's more to *Super Star Wars* than initially meets the eye...

Tatooine Desert

1 On top of the first big sand dune, fire up to reveal a big heart.

BOSS

2 This boss is really easy, and if you can't kill it you have problems. But, for those devoid of gaming ability, here's how to do it. As soon as you see a tentacle rise out of the quicksand, move away as quickly as possible and let rip with your gun, not forgetting to shoot any threatening rocks. Repeat until there isn't a boss any more.

Heading For Sandcrawler

3 As long as you remember that going forwards with the thrusters turned off causes you to fire at the floor, you'll be okay. Shoot your quota of Jawas, and then head for the sandcrawler. (Don't bother with any other Jawas.)

Outside Sandcrawler

4 This level calls for a nifty display of jumping skills, and can be incredibly frustrating – vis: missing your footing, plunging down to the ground and having to spend hours climbing back up again. Use both types of jump to help you reach the platforms and dodge enemy firepower, and use the L and R buttons to get a better look at low moving platforms. Before you jump down the entry shaft at the end of the level, shoot the area above it to reveal a 1-up and a blaster power-up – rather handy, all things considered.

Inside The Sandcrawler

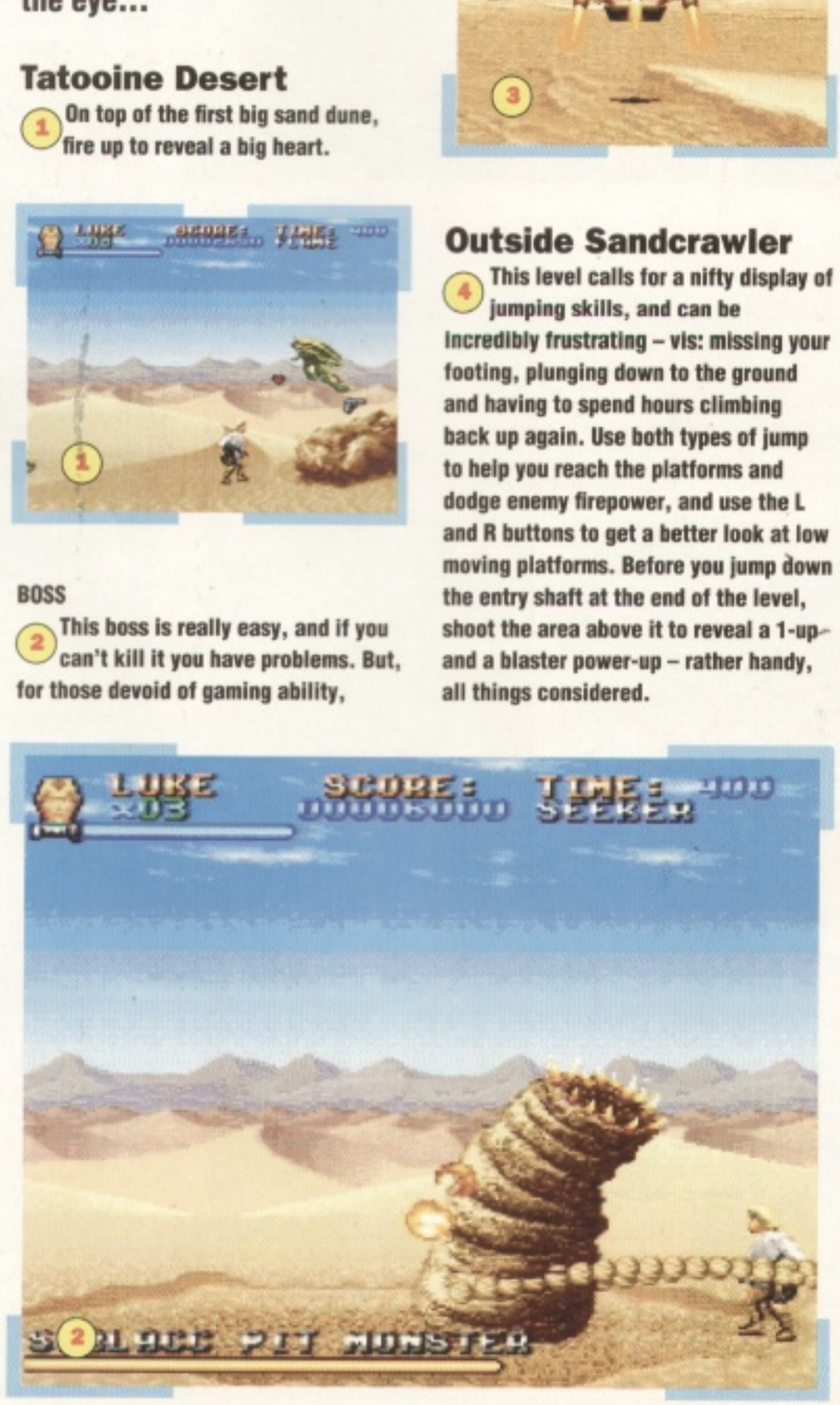
5 Note: The drop leading to the half-way checkpoint conceals a secret chamber in the left wall. Jump across the drop for the goodies.

BOSS

6 The sandcrawler boss isn't half as deadly as the stuff you fall into when you drop off a ledge. At the start there are two ledges. Stay on the first one to avoid two deadly solar flares, and then jump on the second one before the first one scrolls off the screen. Now stay to the front of the ledge to avoid being pushed off and blast away for all you're worth.

Land Of The Sand People

7 Look out for hidden 1-ups here (try the corners of empty caves). Your only threat is the jumping bit across two bottomless chasms where stone-hopping talent is needed to get across. Use the somersault jump for safety. (And keep an eye out for the secret cavern outlined in Mode 7 in issue 5 – basically, fall down the second chasm and hold LEFT.)



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Land Of The Banthas

8 The Banthas are easily disposed of with either a powered-up gun or your light saber. Before the boss, an empty room on the left hides several hidden hearts to top up your health.

BOSS

9 The mutant Womprat is dead easy. Just hold down jump and fire together, and take 40 winks.

Heading For Mos Eisley

10 The same as the first landspeeder level, but you shoot more Jawas.

Mos Eisley

This level is long, so keep an eye on your health sword. Also, look out for boxes stacked in threes which usually contain pick-ups. Don't forget, too, that barrels can be used to cross spikes by running on them.

Cantina Fight

Select Chewie for every level from now on as he has the largest health sword. No advice, except to say that a powerful weapon and a full health sword are advantages when facing the boss.

BOSS

11 Whether you actually win or lose against this monster depends entirely on the mood you find him in. If he stays back a lot, chances are that he'll get a good caning. But if he's always right against you, it'll probably result in your death.

Escape From Mos Eisley

12 There isn't really any useful advice I can offer. After all, the level is straightforward blasting, and the maintenance droid is a joke (easy peasy). Watch out for the boss, though.

BOSS

13 This hover combat carrier is best tackled by first taking out the gun underneath by staying under the ship. Then, destroy the two thrusters and finally the remaining two guns on either side. Then just blast him to bits.

Death Star Hanger Bay

14 This sound advice should help:
1) Develop a rhythm when jumping over TIE-fighters.
2) Use any platforms raised to jump over holes in the floor.

BOSS

15 This ED-209-lookalike is more easily beaten from the back than the front. Slide under it when it jumps, and blast away. (A powerful gun helps.)

Rescue Princess Leia

Only the overwhelming enemy artillery poses a threat here. Just remember to blast wall lasers and jump out of the dips where crushers fall.

BOSS

16 Be honest: do you really need help with this one? It's second only to the maintenance droid in the easyness stakes – just point and shoot.

Tractor Beam Core

17 Only your jumping ability will help you through this bit.

BOSS

18 Just stand directly below the tractor beam core and fire up.

Death Star Surface Attack

19 Apart from the shoddy 3D effect, this bit's a laugh. Don't bother going up and down, just left and right. Collision with a tower is instant death.

Final Trench Attack

Concentrate on shooting enemy fire and saving your shields. Darth Vader pops up here in his own fighter, but he's quick to kill. Hitting the exhaust port is easy. As your counter reaches 50, hit the L and R buttons rapidly to send several photon torpedoes toward it. At least two are sure to hit the target, and that's the end of the Death Star.

WORDTRIS

US Release

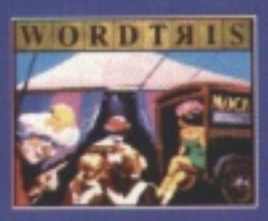
Game: Wordtris
Publisher: Spectrum Holobyte
Price: Approx. £45
Cart ROM: 4 Mbit

Left: Blimey! Four words at once.

Right: Although we've managed to make the word 'GIN', the computer hasn't recognised it as the makers have omitted all words that might lead youngsters astray.

Or so they think! Heh, heh, heh...

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?



I like *Tetris*, and I like words, so I was expecting this to be the game of my dreams. I should have known better. It *sounds* great – making words out of the letters that fall down the screen, with longer words scoring more points.

But then the problems start. First, the chances of getting anything better than a three-letter word are slim, especially with the lack of vowels. (Luckily this is a US game, though, and they're keen on short, easy-to-spell words, so you'll be able to pick up points from things like 'GEE' and 'SIS'.) Then there's the crazy layout of the screen, which crams all the action into the bottom left-hand corner. But what ruined it for me, though, was that the blocks fall so fast, and there's such a short distance between the top of the playing area and the bottom, that you aren't given time to think. So, it's just a game of luck, and seems silly.

And then you discover that pressing 'pause' freezes the action, giving you as much thinking time as you want, while utterly destroying the point of the game. For heaven's sake.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
50%	57%	35%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	40%
44%		

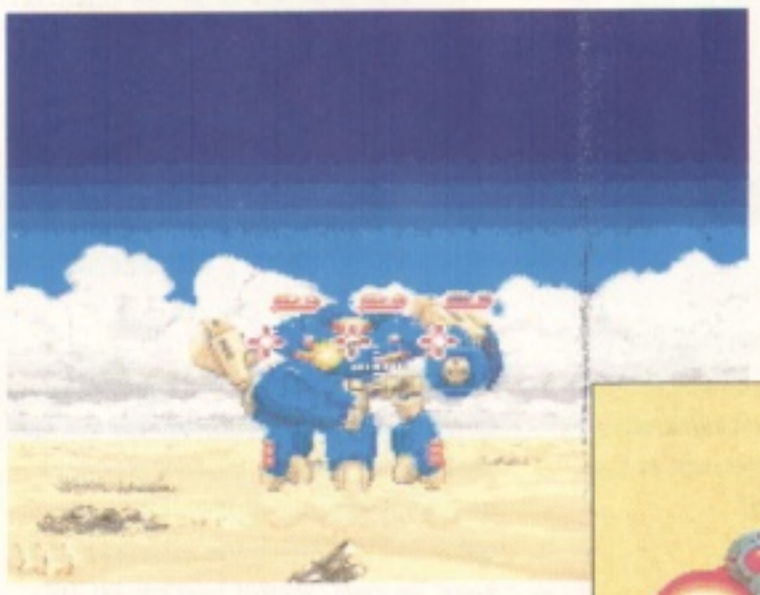
VERDICT: Fine in principle, and fun for a little while, but they seem to have made a bit of a hash of it. What should needs lots of brain-power is really just a game of luck.

X-ZONE

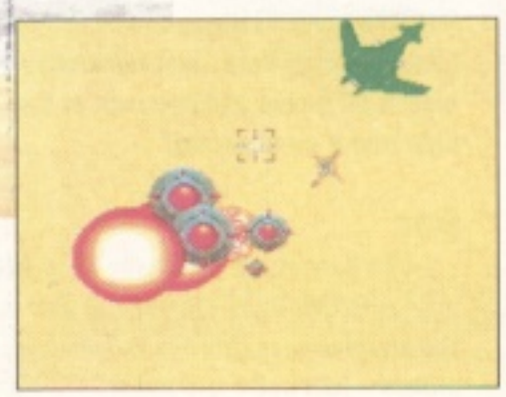
US Release

Game: X-Zone
Publisher: Kemco
Price: £37.99
Cart ROM: 4 Mbit

One of the game's scrolling levels. The background moves, but the idea's the same.



Ever wondered why all Super Scope games are in horrible, bright pastel shades? We reckon it's probably for technical reasons.



What better grab to finish with than one of the game's first level? The screen spins around in Mode 7 as you spiral towards the enemy base (that cross-shaped thing).

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Here at *Super Play* we're afflicted by a terrible sinking feeling every time a new Super Scope game comes out. The Scope's such a nicely-made piece of equipment, and it works so well, but it's looking increasingly likely that decent Super Scope games simply won't happen.

X-Zone is cast in very much the same mould as the Super Scope 6, *Battle Clash*, et al, in that things whizz around the screen, and have to be shot. And that's really its downfall. To be fair, *X-Zone* probably has the best shot at it yet (if you'll excuse the limp pun), with plenty of variety to the backgrounds and some impressive baddies to attack. There's Mode 7 in abundance too, as well as loads of really loud explosions.

But, as usual, all you can do is shoot things. So this is really just a version of *Space Invaders* (which would be bad enough in itself) where you can only fire, and not move around the screen. And that really *does* get boring.

This is probably the best Super Scope game so far, usurping *Battleclash* by a good few percentage points. But that's really not saying all that much.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
79%	68%	60%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	55%
50%		

VERDICT: The best Super Scope game to date, but still pretty dire. So, unless *Terminator 2*'s any good, we're going to light a bonfire and toss our Scope onto it. Sorry.

PRO BASEBALL LEAGUE '93

Baseball is largely unloved in this country. And here at *Super Play* we like to side with the underdog, which means you'll have to read this baseball game review. Sorry.

Pro Baseball League '93 rises above lesser baseball games by bombarding you with 'neat touches'. Like this one, for example, where the batter's just been sent out.

Japanese Release

Game: Pro Baseball League '93
Publisher: Sony Music Entertainment
Developer: In-house
Price: Approx. £50
Release: Out now
Players: 1 to 2 simultaneously
Cart ROM: 12 Mbit

Baseball for the dimensionally challenged? Not at all. This is how the Japanese like their sports games to be – cute, slick and colourful. We tend to find ourselves agreeing.

Oh no! Our fielder bursts into tears as the ball slips through his hands.

As the ball rises into the air, the view switches to this bird's-eye overhead one, with lots of brilliantly-animated players running around.

The intro sequence is excellent. The tension mounts as the batter grips his bat. The pitcher narrows his eyes, takes aim and... falls over – into the arms of a pair of gorgeous babes. We've watched it over and over.

The 'automatic fielding' option takes the heartache out of the usually hit-and-miss positioning of your fielders.

As well as playing games, you can practise pitching, batting, fielding and home run-scoring. Which is surprisingly good fun.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

As I pointed out in my complete guide to baseball games in issue 2 (which I still can't believe I agreed to do), the Japanese are into baseball in a big way, and they churn out baseball games by the lorry-load. The trouble is, here in the UK we really don't care a fig about the sport, so tracing importers who stock the games can be tricky. We got our copy of *Pro Baseball League '93* sent over from Japan.

But why did we bother? Well, basically because we'd heard such good things about it. It's the sequel, after a fashion, to a game called *Extra Innings*, which was awarded 65% in issue 2's guide. The good points of *Extra Innings* were its really cute characters, slick animation, accessible, Japanese-free front end and the fact that it was the best-selling baseball game in Japan at the time. The downside was the speed of the thing – the ball whizzed about so fast that hitting or catching it was virtually impossible.

So has the speed problem been cured in *Pro Baseball League '93*? Well... I'm not telling. You'll have to wait to find out.

Everything else is great, though. The characters are more or less the same as those in the original game, but they're more colourful and cuter. They've got nicer backgrounds to run around against, too – and the animation during the overhead-view sequences is a vast improvement. The front end, too, is smarter and easier to use than ever before, with most of the important bits being in English. The sound effects are great, the music's okay (it's the same as *Extra Innings*', in fact), and the little clouds of dust as people slide about the place are a nice touch.

And – yes! – the speed's exactly right, making the game fast enough to be reasonably exciting, but slow enough so that you can tell what's going on.

While it's still a baseball game, and can thus get extremely tedious unless you're a committed fan, *Pro League '93* is the best of its kind – at least until *2020 Super Baseball* comes out in March.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
80%	81%	83%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	77%
70%		

VERDICT: Sure it's another baseball game. But it's a really good one!

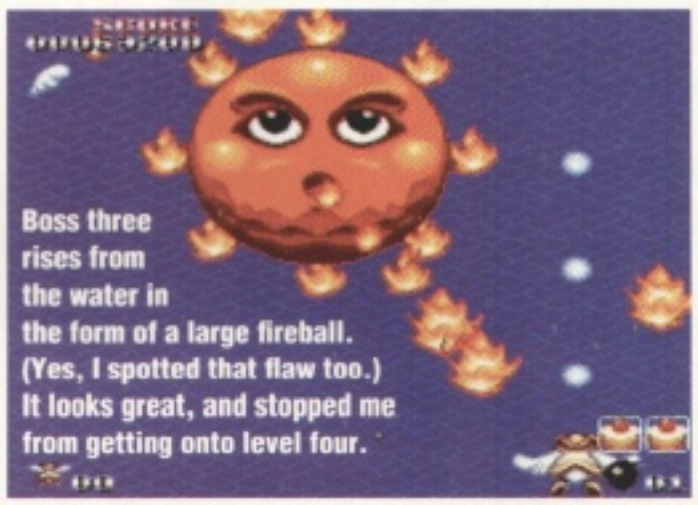
FLYING HERO

BUGLE'S BIG ADVENTURE

Another cute Japanese shoot-'em-up bounces into the office looking for a keen, skilled games player to take it through its paces. How naive – two thirds of the review team are hopeless. (*Oi!* – *Ed.*) Looks like Jason will have to save the day again...

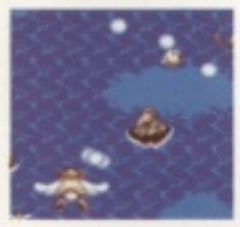
Japanese Release

Game: Flying Hero: Bugle's Big Adventure
Publisher: Sofel
Developer: In-house
Price: £45-£50
Release: Available now
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit



Boss three rises from the water in the form of a large fireball. (Yes, I spotted that flaw too.) It looks great, and stopped me from getting onto level four.

CALL THAT A WEAPON?



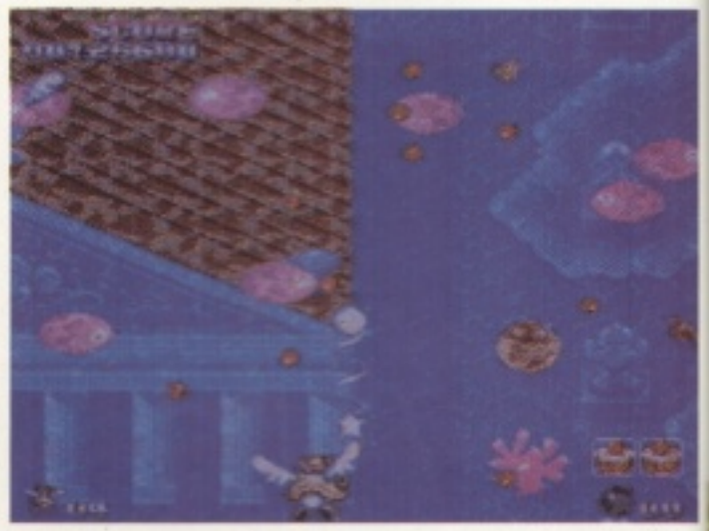
The weapons you get in *Flying Hero* are all okay. Okay, that is, in a sort of seen-it-all-before-but-who-cares? kind of a way. Don't expect to be knocked out by anything spectacular here.

These squiggly ones are typical, for instance. However, more care has been taken with the bosses, which all make a real effort – Mode 7 appearing regularly.

The Flying Hero himself is a strange little character – he's actually a baseball with wings, or something very similar. Indeed, every sprite that appears is on the weird and off-beat side, which gives the game 99% of its appeal.

Yes, those *are* giant flying monkeys whizzing around the screen, and no, I don't know what the reasoning behind them is. (I'm only the reviewer, after all.)

Holding down L or R while firing will let you shoot at an angle. Each of your different weapons can be powered up a few times, too.



Oh no! It's all gone blue and purple! And there's a mutant purple rubber glove on my trail – and lots of... *cherries* flying about for some reason. Weird!

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

'*Twin Bee*! It's *Twin Bee*!' I cried when I switched on *Flying Hero*. Unfortunately the window was open, and everyone in the office panicked, fearing they were about to get stung by a couple of furry insects. *I* knew what I was talking about, though – *Twin Bee* is actually a Konami shoot-'em-up with a very similar look and feel to *Flying Hero*'s. I can spot a rip-off a mile away but, given that the vast majority of video games are rip-offs in one way or another, I'll turn a blind eye for now.

Besides, the fact that *Flying Hero* stars a winged baseball called Bugle (who looks uncannily similar to the mascot of *Ultra Baseball*) is excuse enough for giving it a chance, especially when it provides all these monkeys, teddy bears and other critters to blow to pieces. Blow to pieces, that is, in a nice, friendly way, of course. Anyway, aren't I supposed to be telling you whether it's any good or not? (*Now there's an idea – Ed.*)

To be honest, I really wasn't expecting this to be much fun. After all, the best shoot-'em-ups usually arrive with about four months of hype and publicity behind them. But *Flying Hero is* fun, and it's slickly programmed and very playable. The lack of slow-down helps it along to a degree, too – slow-down being the stumbling block for far too many games of this type. Also, the provision of just three continues makes for an addictive challenge. So far so good, then.

But there are aspects of *Flying Hero* that aren't so great. The graphics are fine, but that's as far as it goes, and shoot-'em-ups need gob-smacking graphics to succeed these days. Next to *Parodius* it all looks a bit drab. The sound is pretty average too. (See 'graphics', in fact.) And it plays... well, fine, but not spectacularly well.

Oh damn. I'd better just say it, hadn't I? *Flying Hero* is a very run-of-the-mill game. As such, it can only be recommended to committed shoot-'em-up collectors, *Twin Bee* fans, or lovers of cute games.

● Jason Brookes

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
72%	64%	75%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
62%		68%

VERDICT: An average shoot-'em-up with sturdy gameplay and a sense of humour, but hardly a must-buy. Full of cute things, though.

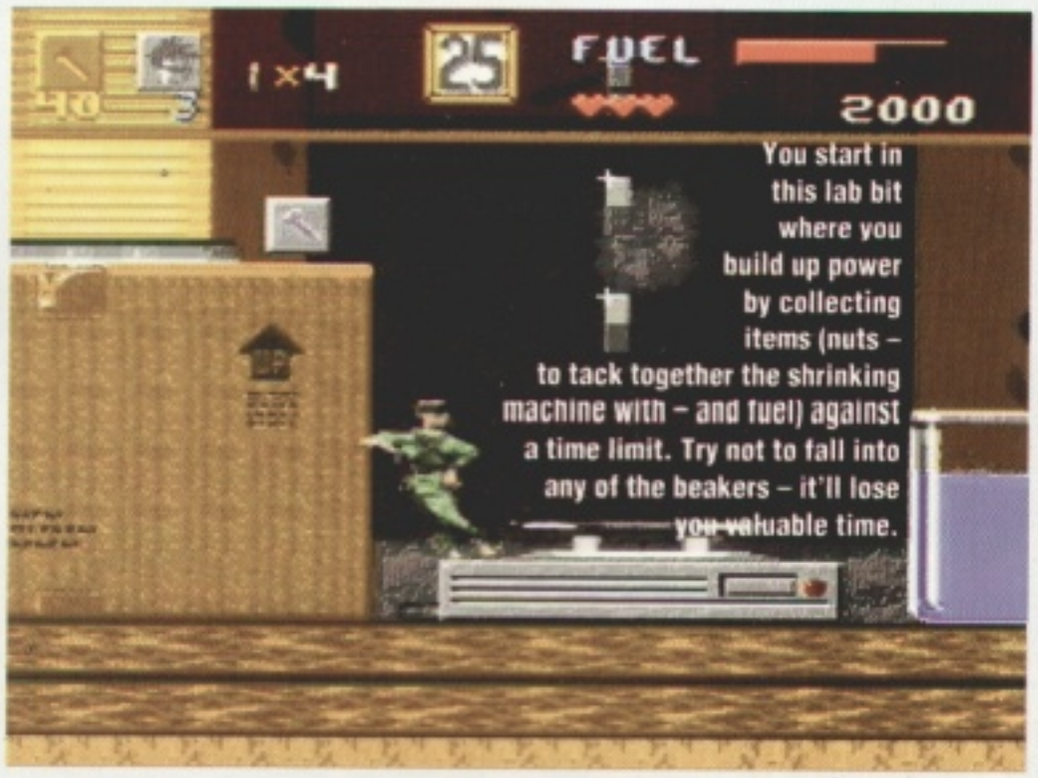
HARLEY'S HUMUNGOUS ADVENTURE

US Release

Game: Harley's Humungous Adventure
Publisher: Hi Tech Expressions
Developer: Visual Concepts/ EA
Price: Approx. £50
Release: Out now
Players: 1 or 2
Cart ROM: 4 Mbit

If you crossed *Honey, I Shrunk The Kids* with a platform game, you'd probably get something not unlike *Harley's Humungous Adventure*.

At first glance, *Harley's Humungous Adventure* is a fairly typical sort of platform game, the twist being that our hero is only about six inches tall, and his battle ground is the inside of an average suburban house. (Fans of *The Incredible Shrinking Man, Honey, I Shrunk the Kids* and similar will be right at home.) Harley's a scientist who's had a bit of a shrinking accident, you see, and has to piece together his exploded shrinking machine, as well as fight off the mutant bugs he's created. It's all in a day's work...



You start in this lab bit where you build up power by collecting items (nuts – to tack together the shrinking machine with – and fuel) against a time limit. Try not to fall into any of the beakers – it'll lose you valuable time.

LEVEL 1: KITCHEN

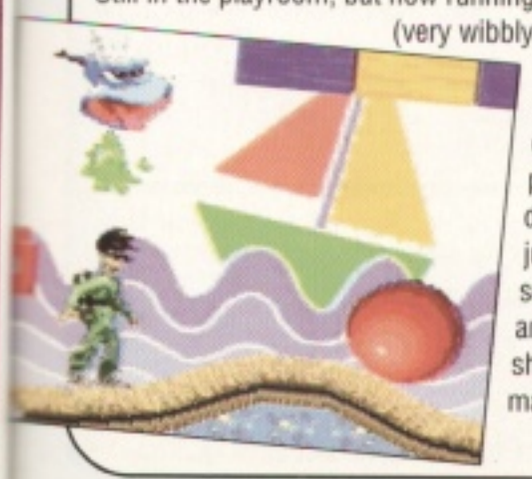
'MAYBE YOU CAN.' (OH DEAR)
The cryptic title to this kitchen-based story refers to the rather vicious tin cans that populate this level. They pop open their ragged-lipped lids to cut you as you try to jump over them, then they roll inexorably off the shelves, set on crushing you. They're heavy enough to make the screen shake.

LEVEL 2: PLAYROOM

'TANKS A LOT'
We're now in the playroom (hence easy-to-draw backdrop), and sitting in a little toy tank, while bouncing balls, walls of bricks, big gaps (this tank can jump, unbelievably), and spiky jacks throw themselves at us. It's original and fun, this bit, if not all that tricky.

LEVEL 3: PLAYROOM

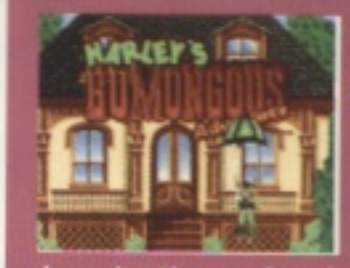
'RUGGED'
Still in the playroom, but now running across a (very wibbly) carpet, Harley takes on more bugs, climbs lots of platforms, does lots of jumping, and searches for another bit of shrinking machine.



LEVEL 4: CLOSET

'BOXED UP'
Trapped inside a closet, Harley must... but no. You get the idea by now, surely?

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?



Harley's Humungous Adventure is one of those games that looks fairly primitive when you first play it, but proves hard to dislike. It's got imagination and an intriguing plot at least, even if it ain't got that much polish (EA arcade games are never as slick as their more serious sports stuff anyway, and this is a case in point).

Imagine these, for instance: a toy tank that jumps; tin cans that make the screen shake as they bounce off the shelves; arrays of knives and forks that will kill you when you land on them (shades of *Roger Rabbit*); collectable weapons that include nails, firecrackers and other tiny household items; a hero who (modishly) looks bored when you leave him standing still for a few seconds (even to the extent of picking his nose)... Neat stuff, and not the sort of detail you'd expect of a sub-standard game.

However, with all that said, this isn't a major release (or, at least, it won't be in most people's eyes), and there's one simple reason why – the graphics. These are what you might call serviceable, rather than great – with flat colours, a simple palate, blocky sprites and (quite importantly) a fairly nondescript central character. Despite it's strengths, this hardly stands a chance against similar efforts from Konami, Capcom et al, and that's mainly (but not exclusively) down to the way it looks.

Is there an explanation for this? Well, graphics just aren't an EA strong point, it seems. Their sports sims can get away with average visuals when it's speed, depth and accuracy of conversion that count. When, however, you're dealing with a genre where sheer visual appeal is a much more important part of the brew, things fall apart. Listen up, EA – the game designer you've got here has some potential (he still needs to make the game a bit more packed and busy, though), but give him a graphic artist with rather more flair next time, huh?

● Matt Bielby

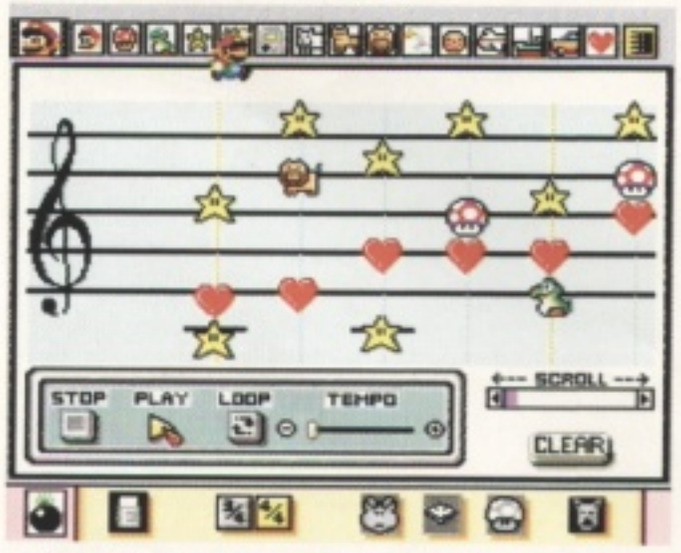
GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
65%	70%	73%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
66%		69%

VERDICT: Cleverly thought out, fairly inventive platform game with it's fair share of good bits, but very average visuals. It's got potential, even if it isn't always realised.

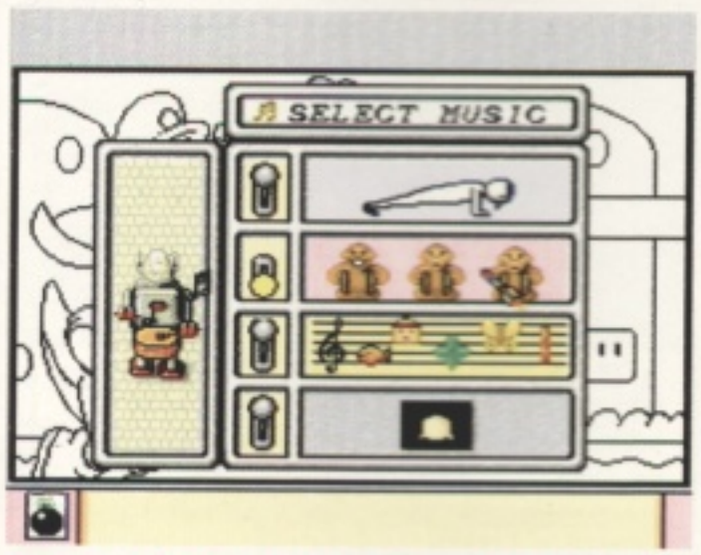
MARIO PAINT

The latest fabulous add-on for the Super Nintendo is a mouse – a bit of plastic with a ball in the bottom. It's a lot more exciting than it sounds, though, and comes complete with a drawing package called *Mario Paint*.

***Mario Paint*, unusually for something with 'Mario' in its title, isn't actually a game. It's a drawing, animation and music package that's aimed at budding young artist-cum-Super Nintendo owners. It's got a host of features, but at its heart is this bit, where you can draw simple pictures on the screen. They can either be really good or completely crap (like this one). (*Oi! – Jez.*)**



Perhaps the second most exciting bit, after the drawing, is the music composition section. There are 15 built-in sounds to build tunes out of. Hurrah!



Similar, but unrelated, are the three tunes you can select as background music while you're doing your drawing.

MICE SHOOTING, KID

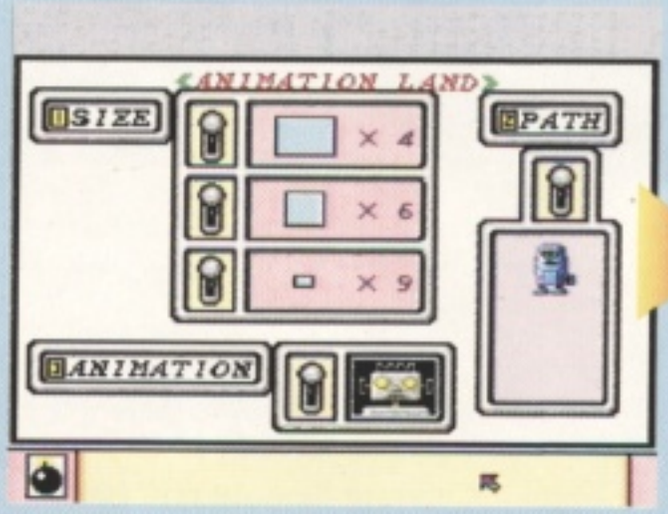
While *Mario Paint* is a fun little cart and everything (for a few minutes), the important thing about this package is the mouse that comes with it. Although it's a bit hard to explain, basically it opens up whole new vistas of... er... whole new vistas, anyway.

Imagine trying to draw something in *Mario Paint* with a joypad, for example. You'd be able to draw horizontal and vertical lines okay, and, at a push, diagonal ones. But if you wanted to draw one that was almost horizontal, but sloping just a tiny bit, you'd be stumped. And curves would be an impossibility. With the mouse, though, you move it around on the table and the little pointer on the screen follows. So you can draw circles, curves, any sort of sloping line... whatever you want, basically.

But *Mario Paint* is only the start. Soon you can expect to be inundated with mouse-compatible games that let you use the mouse to point to icons and things on the screen. *Powermonger* and *King Arthur's World* are the only obvious examples at the moment, but there are more on the way. Watch this space!

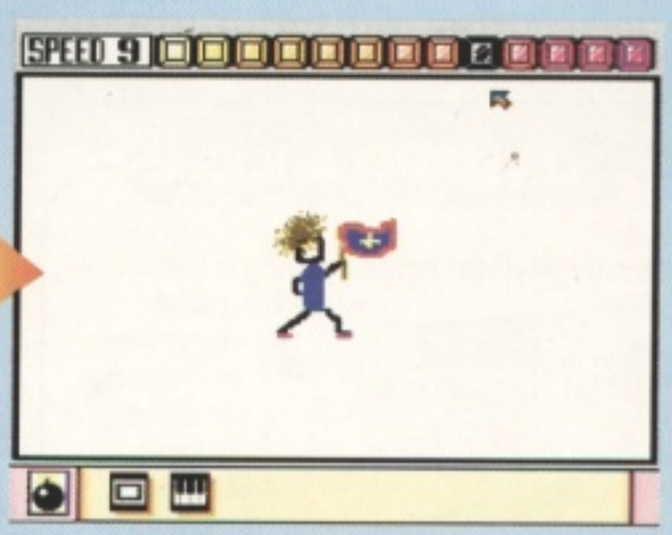
And before you ask, no – Nintendo currently have no plans to release the mouse on its own, so if you want the thing, you're going to have to buy *Mario Paint* and lump it.

ANIMATION MADE EASY



And the third most exciting bit, after the music, is this – the animation section. Here you can create a short sequence of pictures and then get *Mario Paint* to play through them like a cartoon.

Design each frame separately, using the 'copy' feature if you want to create duplicates of the first frame to tweak. (Although perhaps the 'erase' function would be more appropriate here.) (*Grr! – Jez.*)



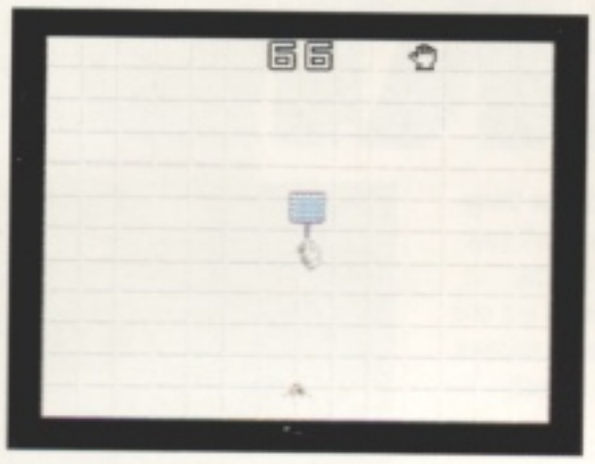
And here's the result – an all-singing, all-dancing, fully-animated... erm... well, Jez reckons it's a man walking along holding a flag, but we think it looks more like... um... actually, we're not quite sure.

UK Release

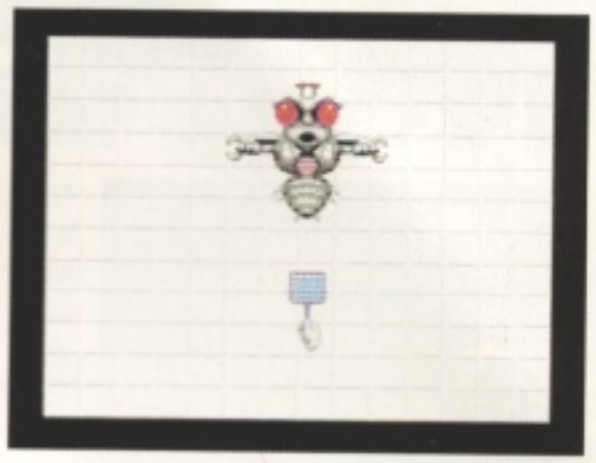
Game: Mario Paint
Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: In-house
Price: £59.99, inc. mouse
Release: Out now
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit + BB

You can add text to your pictures if you want, as Jez has obviously just discovered.

COME FLY WITH ME!

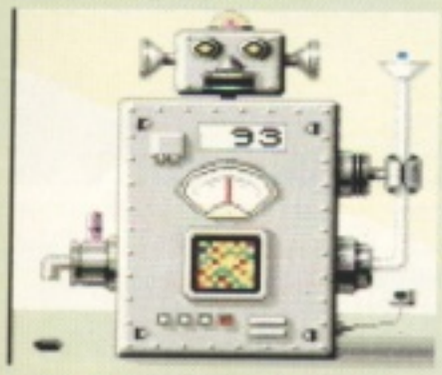


The idea behind *Gnat Attack*, a little game built into the cart, is that it 'helps inexperienced mouse users to establish coordination with the mouse'. Hmm. It's quite good fun, anyway.



You've got to swat the gnats that buzz around the screen, later taking on bombs (out of *Mario World*), and the terrifyingly huge boss gnat at the end, who takes some real swatting.

NEAT LITTLE TOUCHES



Like all Nintendo games, *Mario Paint* is chock-full of special effects and nice touches. Clockwise from top left: adjusting the mouse speed; clearing the screen with a rocket-ship – just one of the many available methods of ridding the world of your mistakes; eek! we seem to have come a cropper in *Gnat Attack*; and the rather odd robot thing you use to save your pictures with.

COLOURING BOOK

If you're *really* useless at drawing, you might want to try colouring in one of the four sample pictures provided. To the right is the naked black-and-white outline, waiting to be filled, and below (oh dear) is Jez's interpretation.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Just think what Leonardo Da Vinci might have achieved if he'd had *Mario Paint* at his disposal. Just imagine 'Sunflowers' with nine frames of animation. (*That's Van Gough – Ed.*) Or 'The Hay Wain' with a foot-tappin' stereo sound track. (*That's Constable – Ed.*) Or... (*Look, this isn't going to work. Jonathan, go away. Jeremy,* Super Play*'s designer, try doing a review – Ed.*)

Hey! Look at all these buttons! Qwertyuiop! @£$%^&*! This is fun! (*Er... – Ed.*) All right, all right. While I wouldn't claim to be a world authority on art packages, I do spend a lot of time tinkering about with the Apple Mac equivalent of *Mario Paint*, and I *can* draw. So I was quite pleased to be given the chance to try this.

And, to start off with at least, I had lots of fun with it. There are loads of features to explore (which are explained elsewhere on this page), and you find new bits every time you use it. And the whole thing's executed with Nintendo's usual sense of humour. But from the point of view of actually drawing things, it's all so limited. There are only 16 proper colours to choose from, which is odd, considering that the Super Nintendo has a palette of thousands. There are lots of pre-defined 'brushes' for drawing with, but it's hard to imagine how any of them could be incorporated into a proper picture. And everything you draw looks so chunky.

The *really* daft thing, though, is that you can't really do an awful lot with your picture once you've drawn it. On a computer art package you can save it onto a disk to look at later, or print it out onto paper. But with *Mario Paint* you're limited to storing one picture in the battery backed-up memory. The only other possibility is recording your creations onto video tape, but that's a bit fiddly.

Mario Paint's fun for a bit, and will probably appeal to youngsters. But it seems that Nintendo poured all their efforts into packing it with gimmicks while neglecting the basics, and I quickly got bored of it

● Jez Bridgeman

GRAPHICS	SOUND	FEATURES
70%	60%	60%
LASTABILITY	OVERALL SCORE:	55%
45%		

VERDICT: By all means buy *Mario Paint* for the mouse, which will come in dead handy later on, but don't expect to have much fun with *Mario Paint* itself.

Thanks to DMC Consoles, (0225) 448253, for lending us *Mario Paint*.

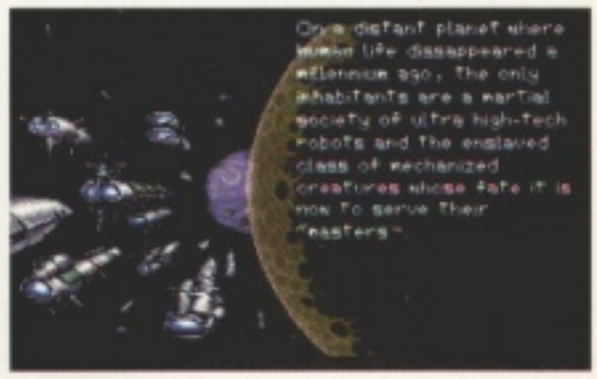
IMPERIUM

US Release

Game: Imperium
Publisher: Vic Tokai
Price: Approx. £50
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

That odd blue thing is your assault suit. And the yellow curvy things are one of the four weapons you can collect.

Save up your smart bombs to use on this giant end-of-level-baddy.


On a distant planet where human life disappeared a millennium ago, the only inhabitants are a martial society of ultra high-tech robots and the enslaved class of mechanized creatures whose fate it is now to serve their masters.

Can you spot the spelling mistake in this pic from the intro? (*Lemme at it – Sue.*).

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

'Look, Jonathan – another assault suits game,' said Matt. 'You remember you enjoyed *Assault Suits Valken*, and this is just as good.' 'Aw, thanks!' I replied, not quite believing my luck.

A couple of minutes' play revealed that I'd been stitched up. Again. *Imperium* isn't really an assault suits at all. It looks more like a nobby Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit game on the Amiga, where the central sprite just happens to look a bit like an assault suit, and you get attacked by other sprites which look a bit like assault suits.

Well, that's in between the long stretches when there's nothing happening at all.

There are some reasonable extra weapons, but they look like the ones in *Super Aleste* without being as good. The graphics are rubbish, though – titchy sprites, not much animation, and weedy explosions. And, although the difficulty curve is about right – easy to start with, and going through 'tricky' to 'incredibly tough' – there's little incentive to stick with it.

It's not very good, in other words, and this is probably the last you'll hear of it.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
41%	55%	60%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	40%
38%		

VERDICT: *Imperium* is very lacklustre. In a couple of days time you'll probably have forgotten it ever existed. (It's called *Assault Suits Darion* in Japan, by the way.)

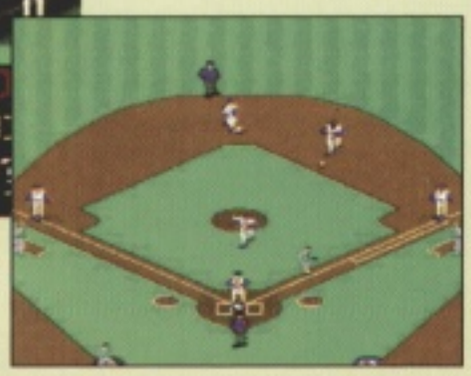
SUPER BATTER UP

US Release

Game: Super Batter Up
Publisher: Namco
Price: Approx. £50
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

Top: Being an American game, *Super Batter Up* features good, honest, American baseball teams.

Left: Why do baseball balls have to be so horrid and hard? And why do they throw them so fast?



Right: The overhead view is great for the batting team, but not for the fielding side, trying to track the ball as it heads for the boundary.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

I picked up *Super Batter Up* right after checking out *Pro Baseball League '93* (having for some reason been branded *Super Play*'s baseball expert), and the difference was clear. *Pro Baseball* is Japanese through and though, while *Batter Up* has an American flavour. And *Pro Baseball* is great, as baseball games go, while *Batter Up* is useless.

So what's the prob? Well, there are lots of them. (Deep breath.) The ball is pitched too fast, so you can't exercise control over where you hit it. The fielders run too slowly and, as usual with baseball games, they're off the screen most of the time, so it's hard to position them properly. The ball doesn't move well. The graphics are garish, with lumpen animation. The organ music is fine, but it drowns out what feeble sounds effects there are. And that's about it.

If *Super Batter Up* was the only baseball game in the world, it might be worth a look. But it's one of about 54, and isn't as good as half of them. Oh yeah, and the fielders manning the bases refuse to retrieve the ball, even if it's rolled to a halt right at their feet.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
49%	60%	59%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	53%
49%		

VERDICT: Yet another baseball game rolls off the production line, flops to the ground and lies there twitching for a while before quietly expiring.

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MODE 7

CALLING ALL CHEATS, CRACKERS, AND GAME FREAKS!

Back again and absolutely brimming with tips, it's Mode 7 – Britain's biggest and best Super NES tips section! You'll find these pages packed with a choice selection of the most helpful, most unusual, and sometimes just plain weirdest cheats ever, just the job to help you past even the toughest of bosses. And if your problem isn't solved here, then don't fret or cry – write to Ask Ade and he'll give you some tip-top gameplaying advice.

Just like those camcorder programmes on TV, Mode 7 relies on your input, so if you want to help gamers worldwide, or can't live without either a fairly impressive *Super Play* pen or an incredible *Super Play* T-shirt (depending on how good your stuff is), send in your cheats and tips to:
Mode 7, *Super Play*, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA12BW.

NHLPA Hockey '93
(EASN)

He's obviously been cracking his way through this one, has Daniel James from Pinner, as he's sent in a passcode from each round of this ice-bound fightfest. But do the codes *have* to be this long, though? It takes ages to type them in.

GBMYY73ZPJJRX3ZD – Second Round: Montreal vs Long Island
G7113H5PYZWBKRYC – Semi Final: Montreal vs New York
C4W53V9421JJRYH5 – Semi Final: Los Angeles vs Minnesota
C42BWBG0OP37LV9J – Final: Los Angeles vs Boston
A pen's on its way to you Daniel.

Er, get your skates on? (*Your heart's just not in it any more, is it? – Ed.*)

Super Probotector
(Konami)

When the screen is scrolling, pressing UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT will give you 13 lives, which is better than a sound thrashing with a large piece of scaffolding. Goodness knows how he found that out (or indeed, how any of you find anything out), but thanks (and a *Super Play* pen) go out to Mark Byrne of Surrey for that one.

You, too, could be the proud owner of a *Super Play* pen – if you can come up with an amusing anagram of the words 'Super Probotector'. Send it to 'Amusing Anagram of *Super Probotector* Competition' at the usual address.

Doing some serious Probotecting.

ASK ADE

INVALUABLE MONTHLY GAMING ADVICE

Wow! It seems as if you lot really are getting yourselves into a lot of bother. I'm currently receiving more mail and more requests for help than ever before, so I've really got my work cut out. I'm also starting to need a bit more room, so let's not waste any more space on chatting – I'll get straight stuck into helping the hapless.

Remember, do keep sending in your gameplaying queries and answers to the questions I'm stuck on, and also, when you write to me, the more detail you go into, the easier it is for me to know exactly what you're on about.

● I have *Contra 3*, the American version, and I've heard there's a level select cheat and a cheat for 30 lives. I can't get it to work, though. Can you help me?
Justin Martin, Bournemouth.

● If I remember correctly, this cheat was first printed in an American magazine, but only worked on pre-production copies of *Contra 3*. The cheat was taken out when the game was released. Sorry.

● When I play *Sim City* I'm always running out of money, and I was wondering if there is a way of getting some more? Thanks.
Leigh Morgan, Reading.

● There *was* a cheat on the Amiga version that let you fool the computer into giving you loadsa money, but it's not on the SNES game. Or at least, I couldn't get it to work, anyway. May I suggest that you simply stop building too fast and set taxes at reasonable rates – that way, you simply shouldn't have a problem. You're being too greedy is all.

● I have a complaint. With all your tips and cheats you fail to state whether or not they'll work on official UK games. Oh, and is there a level select for the UK version of *Super Probotector*?
Mark Difford, Stevenage.

● Good point except, when I reply to a plea for help, the distressed person has normally already stated what system the game is for, and therefore I shouldn't need to repeat myself. As for your own plea for help, see the answer to the last question – we know of no level select in the finished version of the game.

● Could you print some level codes for *Prince Of Persia* – the American version?
Jess Jackson, Surrey.

● Robert Carney of Ampthill is after some too, so here they are. He also wants to know about a level select cheat. I don't know of one, but perhaps someone else does. These codes were sent in by Pierre Poliquin from Quebec in Canada, incidentally. Cheers Pierre.

Level 1: BRNGBB9
Level 2: VRYND9X
Level 3: 3PDWRG4
Level 4: CK1B3X2
Level 5: LY67RVR
Level 6: MNKJBJ9
Level 7: 7VMRD69
Level 8: 4!F+DTR
Level 9: QRLHTCB
Level 10: 8R7CDYR
Level 11: Q2GSTP9

Super Fire Pro Wrestling

(Human)

Here are all the passcodes for all the levels of *Pro Wrestling*, thanks to Roger Prydderch from Stockport, and no, we're not going to send you *Desert Strike*.

Easy level:
GVGN2 BSEC7 WT
CUVT3 XQTED P3
IKCXZ YKPNI PP
IKCHV UGTVQ HX
LRRY3 SEJIA IV
FO5BB HUQJN UO
BFM6G OJ3QR YL
CUV75 RWHMP TX
MGK7C A3CGX HM
KY7ZF 7MA3V RM
JKNSD LBEEN BM
FO5PF DQ6RR YS
HGWGF IJT55 QJ
LRRKT 2MLMA IV
GVSXO V25QP WD
KY7VC YLM7X DO
JKNZD LBPAP TO
EYECI Y3JBI DI
GVSQO V2VQP GD
CUV27 TUCWT 7L

Hard level:
O5V2B ATQFI EI
GV2RG FKMKX 63
O5V2J I3QFI UI
KYXDR LYGHN JU
GV2RC ZWEC7 WT
GV2R2 BOUSP GD
GV2RK R6USP GD
CU5LJ FCTQX LP
CU5LZ VSTQX LP
CU5LB NKTQX 3P
CU5LR 52TQX 3P
KYXDT J223R FI
KYXDD ZX23R FI
KYXD3 BS23R VI
KYXDL RC23R VI
AY3YP YJ7ML GY
AY3Y7 IZ7ML GY
AY3YH QB7ML WY
AY3YX AR7ML WY
IKKXE FX7XS VV
Extra dude: IKKXU VH7XS VV

Just type in the passwords we've listed above, and the 'wrestle' follow.

Here's where you type them in. (Look, we're just trying to be helpful.)

There was this terrible accident at the boomerang-throwing competition.

We're really great at this game, but we won't 'rabbit' in.

Tiny Toons

(Konami)

To get you whizzing through all the levels of this one, K Ruston of Rotherham (tell us your first name, 'K' – we're all friends around here), has diligently made a note of all the pass codes, and even included an extra bonus pass code (whoo!) which apparently lets you pick the game you want to play on the bonus wheel.

Level 1: PLUCKY DUCK/BABS BUNNY/ FROG WITH GLASSES ON
Level 2: ROAD RUNNER/MONTANA/ ELMYRA
Level 3: GOGO DODO/SHIRLEY/ HAMPTON
Level 4: FROG WITH GLASSES ON/ PLUCKY DUCK/BABS BUNNY
Level 5: GOGO DODO/CALAMITY COYOTE/ROAD RUNNER
Level 6: HAMPTON/PLUCKY DUCK/ FROG WITH GLASSES ON
Bonus code: ELMYRA/SHIRLEY/ CALAMITY COYOTE

Nifty stuff, eh?

Level 12: 8FQP33N
Level 13: YJ!!+1R
Level 14: ZYM83R7
Level 15: QKCXTN7
Level 16: 44K!DDJ
Level 17: 71QBV!V
Level 18: 4QQWMVJ
Level 19: Y4YTM67
Level 20: 8X11F5Z

● Please could you give me some passwords for *Dragon's Lair*? I've got the first password, which gets me past the two snakes, but could you give me some more?
Barry Evans, Birmingham.

● No problem (thanks to Carl Clarabut of Enfield, who sent me a whole bunch of codes recently). Here's the level one code, the one you've already got, for anyone who's interested:

2 - A; 4 - B; 6 - D; 7 - C

And here's a level two code, to get you that little bit further into the game:

3 - B; 5 - C; 7 - D; 8 - A

● In *Super Play*, issue 1, there was a character vs character cheat mentioned for the American and Japanese versions of *Street Fighter II*. Does it work on the UK version, too?

● I believe it does.

LOST SOULS
And here're some of those gameplaying queries that I just couldn't help with. Can you do any better?

● Please could you help? I've reached the end of *Super Adventure Island* and I can't kill the last boss, Dark Cloak. Could you please tell me how it's done? Also, is there a menu?
Steven Heaton, Ashton-in-Makerfield.

● Sorry, I haven't really played the game. Can any one else help Steven out?

● Please could you help me? After I defeated the final team in *Super Soccer* I had to face the referee's team, Nintendo. I've played this team time and time again but I always get beaten. Do you know of any cheats for it?
Chen Hogi, Uxbridge.

● I hate soccer and never play the game, so I can't help you, but seeing how you seem to think differently I'll ask all the readers if they can help. Anyone?

● Do you know any cheats for the US version of *Bart's Nightmare*, especially Maggie's Temple or Bartzilla?
Stephen Middleton, London.

● No, I don't, and Rodney Whitemore has asked me the same question. Does anybody else have any tips or cheats, to put these two guys out of their misery?

PROBLEMS SOLVED!
This is the bit where *you* the readers help out those people stuck on their games. If you can solve any of their problems, then write to me.

● Here are the codes to the UK version of *Krusty's Super Fun House*, as requested by James Tuffin in issue 3. (*And printed in Mode 7 in issue 4. Pay attention – Ed.*)
Level 2: SKINNER
Level 3: SCRATCHY
Level 4: BART DUDE
Level 5: BOUVIER

David Saunders, Hounslow.

• Cheers David.

That's quite enough questions and answers for one month, I think. Don't forget, though – I'll need lots more for next month. So write without delay to: Ask Ade, *Super Play*, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

HUMAN GRAND PRIX
(Human)

In a battle game, if you don't like the look of the starting grid, hold select and press B to change it.

This'll be the starting grid, by the looks of it.

Bulls vs Blazers
(EASN)

Here's a game that's just crying out for some codes. It can stop now, thanks to Mr HJ Sulaiman of Southampton.

Supersonics vs Suns
Quarter Final: **FQZBGCVT**
Supersonics vs Clippers
Semi Final: **FQXBZCVP**
Supersonics vs Knicks
Final: **FQOGZCVG**
Supersonics winning the championships: **FQWGZCVC**
Watch for postie with your pen!

The Addams Family
(Ocean)

Another code that pretty much plays the game for you, is this one sent in for *The Addams Family* by Marc Obertelli from Heysham. Entering 21112 will instantly give you a sword, 100 lives and Pugsley. So that's that one finished then.

Desert Strike
(Electronic Arts)

This one's the ultimate cheat, in that it gets you to the end of game sequence without all of the hassle of playing any of the game itself! It was sent in by Gregory Frensham and works on his American import copy of *Desert Strike*. Type in 99P55LM and you should be whisked straight to the White House lawn. Thoroughly pointless, maybe, but pretty interesting nonetheless.

ACTION REPLAY CODES

You'll need an Pro Action Replay cartridge to use these cheat codes, and the simplest way to get one of these handy little gadgets is to turn to page 78.

Super Probotector
7EIF 8A63 Player 1 infinite lives
7EIF CA63 Player 2 infinite lives
7EIS 8C02 Player 1 infinite bombs
7EIS CC02 Player 2 infinite bombs

Super Star Wars
7E08FB03 Infinite lives
7E0A7924 Infinite energy

Smash TV
7E18A06 Everlasting weapons player 1
7E189906 Everlasting weapons player 2

Lemmings
7E00950X Where X is the number of climbers you want to start the level with
7E00960X For floaters
7E00970X For lemmings
7E00980X For blockers
7E00990X For builders
7E009B0X For miners
7E009C0X For diggers

ASSAULT SUITS VALKEN
(NCS Masiya)

A tip already? The first of many, let's hope. If you go through the whole of the first level without shooting any baddies at all (apart from the engine thing at the end of the level, of course) you'll be able to select a brilliant flame thrower on the next level. We tried going through all of that level as well without shooting any baddies, just to see what would happen, but we got killed. Sorry about that.

Incidentally, did you know that if you lived in Germany you'd pronounce the game's name as 'Assault Suits Falken'? Incredible but true. And, that being the case, you'd be forgiven for thinking it had something to do with birds of prey or something.

Bafroooooooooosh! That's the closest we can get to describing the ear-splitting sound of your special deluxe flame-thrower ripping through a formation of baddies.

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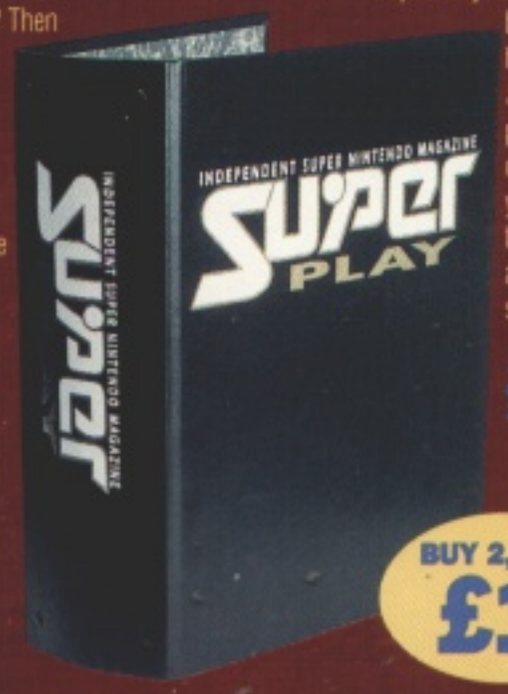

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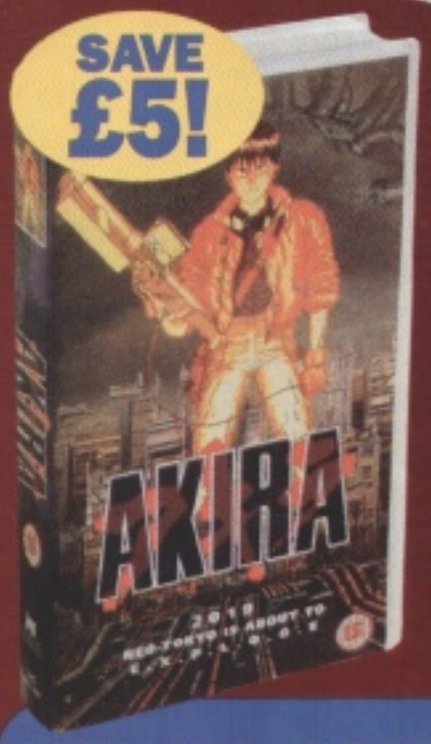

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GAMEFREAK

SNES TECH & GAMING ANSWERS

by Jason Brookes

There are three things you should know about Gamefreak: 1) He knows more about the Super Nintendo scene than anyone else. 2) He'll answer questions that lesser magazines wouldn't have a clue about. 3) He won't try and take the mickey out of you. (Unless you *really* deserve it, that is.)

Dear Gamefreak,
1) Will *The Secret of Monkey Island 1* or *2* ever be released on cartridge or CD ROM? If so, when exactly?
2) In the office what is your fastest *Mario Kart* time on Mario Circuit 1?
3) How much does a Datel Pro Action Replay cart cost?
4) When are MicroProse releasing *F-15 Strike Eagle* on the SNES?
5) Are there any other flight sims planned?
6) Is *Zelda IV* actually being programmed at the moment?
7) Do you have any info on it?
Darren Morton, Cloebury Mortimer, Worcs.

1) It's appearing soon on the Mega CD, but there's no news on it for the SNES. Yet.
2) Since Matt erased them all the other day (he's *so* clumsy), I can't check my personal best – I know it was around 1' 06" though.
3) £49.99. However, if you buy it from our Superstore on page 78 you'll save a fiver. We're so good to you.
4) It's scheduled for February in the States and June in the UK.
5) Argonaut are supposed to be programming three games using their new Super F/X chip – it's perfectly suited to these kinds of games.
6) & 7) Yes! But for proof you'll have to use a microscope on this photo of Nintendo's headquarters in Japan. If you look carefully in one of the top windows you'll sneak a look at *Zelda IV*!

This is as near as our man in Japan got to Nintendo HQ.

If you really squint you can just make out a CD ROM player too! (*Calm down – Ed.*) Don't tell them I told you though.

Dear Gamefreak,
1) In the games with battery back-up, just how long does this last?
2) Will *Mortal Kombat* ever be released on the Super NES?
3) Does the Datel Pro Action Replay act as a convertor too? Does it run *Mario Kart*?
4) If games only cost £10-15 to make, how come they cost £45 and above to buy?
5) When *Sensible Soccer* comes out, will it have the backpass rule included?
6) When is *Starfox* coming out, and is it similar to *Star Blade* in the arcades?
7) Is *Bubsy* a 16 megabyte cart and, if so, does this mean it will cost the same price as *Street Fighter II*?
8) Is it true that the Super NES can't handle digitised graphics in any form? (Look at *Pitfighter*!)
9) When are you going to review *Gods*?
Tim Walker, Great Barr, Birmingham.

1) It should last a good while on an unused cart. However, if you switch a game on and off repeatedly it can lose the data stored on it. Also, avoid placing such carts next to magnetic fields (televisions, hi-fi, etc) – interference can corrupt the data inside.
2) Yes, later this year, and by all accounts it's looking brilliant.
3) Yes, it works as both a dual cartridge universal adaptor (to allow US, Jap, or UK games to be played on any console), and also as a bridge adaptor to let US games be played on a Japanese machine and vice versa (as US and Jap systems and carts have the same security codes, a 'host' cart does not need to be plugged onto the back of the Pro Action Replay).
4) Nintendo's market is far smaller in the UK, and so they claim that they lose the economies of scale (cost savings of large scale manufacture and distribution) that enable them to keep cart prices lower in the States and Japan. There *is* some truth in this, but we are still exploited. We'll look at this in greater detail in the near future.
5) It should include *all* the options that made it into the Amiga version.
6) *Starfox* is similar to *Star Blade* but not quite as linear. *Star Blade* didn't allow freedom of flight – the computer had a set route – *Starfox* will be a bit more interactive, with more control. It really looks the business. We can't wait.
7) It's not 16 megabytes, but 16 *megabits*. A megabyte is 1,024K while a megabit is 128k – there are 8 megabits in a megabyte. Consequently, *Street Fighter II* and *Bubsy* are 16 *megabits* or two *megabytes* in size.
8) No, of course it can. *Pitfighter's* just a mess.
9) It's reviewed on page 52.

***Mortal Kombat* – due on the SNES later this year.**

Dear Gamefreak,
1) How much is the average Super Nintendo game in Japan?
2) Which is the best driving game other than *Mario Kart*?
3) Which is the best – Datel's Action Replay or the Game Genie?
4) Will the SNES CD ROM discs work on the Philips CD-I, or the other way round?
5) Is there any way of controlling the bosses in *Street Fighter II*?
Richard Cank, Whixall, Shropshire.

1) Around ¥9,000 (approx £45).
2) *F-Zero* is easily the next best one-player game, but like *Mario Kart* it requires a bit of 'getting into'. *Human Grand Prix* is the next best two-

F-Zero – it seems a bit simplistic to begin with, but ends up proving to be a real challenge.

player driving game after *Super Mario Kart*.
3) The Game Genie is catching up in the 'cred' stakes – there now exist some decent codes for *Street Fighter II*, like the Action Replay ones. However, the Action Replay has the distinct advantage of being able to be used as an adaptor for foreign games. Also, it's just been discovered that the Action Replay can be used to get around the problem of new foreign games that don't work through any normal adaptors. The only game that falls into this category so far is *Super SWIV* (called *Firepower 2000* on US import) – by putting a code in the Action Replay first it allows the UK console to run the game without any problems. Should future imported carts have this feature (protection routines written in the game code), then an Action Replay could be a worthwhile investment. Of course, the Game Genie could be used in the same way with the relevant code.
4) CD-I compatibility is a bit of a grey area at the moment. We'll let you know when we have more information.
5) With a Game Genie you can control the bosses, but it doesn't give you an accurate replica of the *Champion Edition* (see pic) – it crashes and glitches badly and the moves are just overlaid on those of other characters (eg Ryu's hurricane kick is used on M Bison to activate his flaming torpedo). It seems the game wasn't programmed to allow players to control them properly.

Controlling M Bison with the Game Genie – it's not perfect, though.

Dear Gamefreak,
1) In Gamefreak issue 3 I noticed that you said you could get your UK Super Nintendo converted to a full-screen, full-speed console, and also have it deprotected to run foreign carts without an adaptor. Is this wise, or will it wreck my machine?
2) Which company would you recommend to do the conversion?
3) Will I still need an adaptor to run US carts (because they are a different shape)?
4) Would I still need a SCART TV for a converted machine like this?
John Fletcher, Darlington, Co. Durham.

1) & 2) The UK console is designed to run at 50 Hz, and anything that changes it is in danger of invalidating the warranty. 60 Hz conversions and software deprotection on the UK machine *may* be reliable, but remember that internal conversions such as these can't be guaranteed to be 100% compatible with future add-ons like the forthcoming CD ROM unit. Only go through with such conversions if you're prepared to pay to have your machine corrected should you encounter any problems.
3) You'll still need a bridge adaptor to extend the cart slot of the UK console.
4) It doesn't have to be a SCART TV (if it's converted to 60 Hz PAL), but it *must* be able to detect a 60 Hz signal. I've covered this side of things extensively in all our back issues.

Dear Gamefreak,
1) Can I connect an imported SNES to a Commodore 1701 monitor? (At the moment my UK SNES is connected to it using the stereo A/V cable.)
2) Does the cable mentioned above provide better picture/sound quality?
3) Can Jap/US joypads and joysticks be used on the UK SNES, or do I have to use another converter?
4) Why are games released earlier in the States?
James Bowden, Rudston, North Humberside.

1) & 2) Is it connected through the SCART socket (21-pin), or an A/V connection (usually a yellow plug/socket)? If you hook up an imported console to your monitor using the same cable you'll only get a black-and-white picture because the signal is composite NTSC. Imported machines need custom SCART leads or monitor leads to display the necessary RGB signal on UK monitors/TVs. If you want advice on such connections, give TDS Trading a ring on (081) 677 5113 – they make up Super NES leads specially for use with all kinds of monitors and TVs.
3) No, but some *are* compatible – check with importers. Funnily enough, UK pads seem to work fine on Japanese and US machines.
4) Japanese companies often have offices in the States and therefore can plan US translations, conversions etc, much earlier. As far as US-developed games are concerned, they get released in the States first because it's the main market for them. In the UK, most of the Japanese companies are represented by the official UK distributor Bandai – release dates are staggered to give time for the redesigning of packaging, the manufacture of UK carts (all hardware and software is manufactured in Japan no matter where it's sold), and the preparation of marketing support. Companies that don't distribute through Bandai still have their release dates decided by Nintendo of Japan.

Dear Gamefreak,
1) Will games with battery back-up save games through an adaptor?
2) How long does the battery last?
3) Will UK games still have screen borders and a slower speed when run through an adaptor on a Jap or a US machine?
4) I am going to Hong Kong next Summer. Will Hong Kong games work on my US SNES, as they use PAL machines over there?

WHO KNOWS IT ALL?

The Gamefreak, that's who! He's willing to share his copious knowledge too, so if you've got any Super Nintendo-related queries, you couldn't do much better than writing to him at: Gamefreak, *Super Play*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. We'll print your answer as soon as we can.

5) Is *Nigel Mansell's Grand Prix* any good? When's it out on import?
6) Which is better as a lasting and fun game – *Mario Kart* or *Top Gear*?
Simon Leung, Sheffield.

1) Yes, no problems there.
2) For ages, but playing the game will keep it charged up.
3) No, they're full screen and full speed.
4) You can buy all types of carts in Hong Kong.
5) It looks great, but isn't being released until March in Japan. The UK distribution hasn't been confirmed at the time of writing.
6) No contest – *Mario Kart* wins hands down.

Dear Gamefreak,
1) Will we ever get to see a US or UK version of *Dragon Quest V*? Does your Japanese correspondent Peter Evans think it's better than *Zelda III*?
2) *Top Gear 2*. Where is it?
3) About three or four years ago I saw an amazing anime film on the telly about a boy who lived on a giant airship or something and had a mission to destroy a legendary island floating in the sky. Anyway it was really good and all the script was in English – there were no subtitles, so maybe it wasn't an anime cartoon after all. Still, what I really want to know is does it exist or was I just hallucinating?
4) I thought the *Street Fighter II*/*Mario Kart* 'game of the year' contest in issue 4 was a conspiracy! *Street Fighter II* should have won hands down. I agreed with most of the comments but *Street Fighter II* has far more depth and the music is excellent. It seems to me that you just fiddled the ratings to make *Mario Kart* come out on top. Also 'originality' shouldn't come in to it.
5) Please do a complete joypad/joystick test like you did with adaptors.
Ben (a SNES junkie).

1) A US version is coming out this year. Peter likes it a lot but says the text slows him down – he's not 100% fluent in Japanese yet.
2) Gremlin's *Top Gear 2* from Kemco has been delayed and won't appear before April. It looks like their *Nigel Mansell* game will appear first in March.
3) It's called *Laputa* and it was apparently on telly at New Year. I missed it too. (Sniff.)
4) *SFII doesn't* have far more depth at all – the very nature of three dimensions gives *Mario Kart* more depth *before* you take into account all of the different game styles. *SFII*'s music is okay, but hardly excellent. Originality happens to be the reason that *Mario Kart* has such appeal – it can't be ignored. Anyway it's our opinion. You are entitled to your own, you know.
5) Okay, next issue perhaps.

Dear Gamefreak,
1) Which is better, *Super Soccer*, or *Super Soccer Champ*? Are either of them the best football game on the SNES?
2) Why are Mega Drive games cheaper than SNES games? Is it because the Mega Drive is totally crap?
3) Do all the UK games on the Super Nintendo have borders on the screen like *Street Fighter II*?
Fabio 'The Italian Stallion' Mastrangioli, Maidenhead, Berks.

The Italian Stallion? Who's he kidding?
1) *Super Soccer Champ* is only any good as a two-player game. *Super Soccer* is the better game and currently the best soccer game available on the SNES. That is, until *Sensible Soccer* arrives.
2) Most Mega Drive games *are* cheaper, it's true, and this can only be put down to more sensible pricing policies. As for the 'totally crap' factor, I think Nintendo certainly play on the fact that the SNES has some incredible games when compared to the Mega Drive. Of course, this doesn't excuse them from pricing trash like *Race Drivin'* at £50 and classics like *Mario Kart* at £40 – how is anyone supposed to understand that?
3) Most games on the UK SNES have standard borders like on the UK Mega Drive (a 50 Hz image). As explained before, *SFII* has larger borders than most games because the game has a narrower display to start with (to keep the speed up). *SFII* has borders even when running on a imported 60 Hz console but, admittedly, they are far less obvious.

Super Soccer – not a perfect game of football by any means, but currently the best available for the Super Nintendo.

Super Soccer Champ (aka *Hat Trick Hero*) – it lacks the style of the original arcade version, and is only any use in two-player mode.

Mario Kart – probably the best game in the world, and cheap at twice the price!

Dear Gamefreak
1) First, I've been hearing some news knocking about that two totally awesome footy games are to be released on my faithful SNES – *Sensible Soccer* and *Striker*. I'd like to know when they will be released, and have you seen any screenshots?
2) I'd also like to say issue 3's 1993 year planner is great.
3) Will there be any more games like *Mario Kart* that need a special adaptor?
4) When will *Super Star Wars* be released in the UK?
5) When is the CD ROM being released in Japan.
6) Will there be any *decent* anime games?
7) In your opinion what is the most playable game ever?
8) What exactly is the 'Super F/X', and is it anything to do with 32 meg boards or the SNES accelerator?
Shanaz Mishir, Hyde, Manchester.

1) *Striker* is currently being programmed for the SNES (see pic) and is looking far better than the jerky (but playable) Amiga version. It's to be released by Elite in June. Sensible Software's Jon Hare talked about *Sensible Soccer* in our interview with him last issue (see pic). He reckons it will have bigger sprites but will essentially stay the same (ie brilliant). It's not to be released for a while yet – probably around September. Both these footy games could turn out to be the best on the system. UK programmers, eh? You can't beat 'em for a decent footy game, that's for sure.
2) Shucks.
3) There are a few games that only work through more recent adaptors, When ordering an adaptor, always check to see if it works with *Desert Strike*, *Pilotwings* and *Mario Kart*. We covered all the best ones in our guide to adaptors last month.
4) February/March.
5) Possibly not until 1994.
6) Anime games in Japan suffer from the same problems that film licences did on the Amiga – the licence often costs so much that the programming is poorly funded. Examples of good anime games, however, are the *Ranma* series (see page 38) and *Ys III* which isn't too bad either. In fact, the best anime games are usually Japanese RPGs, but it's unlikely many of them will get translated because of the obscurity (to most Westerners at least) of the characters and scenarios. Shame, eh?
7) Probably *Super Mario World* or *Super Mario Kart*. Predictable, I'm afraid.
8) The Super F/X is a custom chip built inside a normal cart to enhance the graphical capabilities of the SNES (especially 3D). Check out the news of *Starfox* on page 30 to see what it can do. The 32 meg boards are just cartridges with four times the data capacity (normal carts are 8 meg boards). There are no details yet of games that use such carts, cost being the main problem. The SNES accelerator is a mis-used term for the Super F/X chip.

A not-very-good picture of *Striker* on the Super NES. I found a better pic in *Total!*'s office, but spilt coffee on it, so it, er, wasn't. (*Clot – Ed.*)

Sensible Soccer on the Amiga – you'll have to wait until the Autumn for the Super Nintendo version.

Dear Gamefreak,
1) Will there ever be an adaptor to play 8-bit NES games on the SNES?
2) Is it possible to make your own SNES games like you can on the Amiga?
Brendan Rogers, London.

1) Yes! Hornby have recently shown one at the Toy Fair in London. More news soon.
2) Yes, but only with very expensive kit.

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Presented with the issue are a set of four *Streetfighter 2* postcards, each depicting a character from the mildly popular beat-em-up in a thrilling action pose. The cards are fully functional and can be sent through Her Majesty's Post. There are eight in the set, allowing much common-room swapping and bickering.

PLAY BACK

HYPER EXCITING READER'S VOICE

This month in Play Back: stop mentioning *Street Fighter II*; CD-ROM and bits and things; slow-down in *Mario Kart*; saving up for games; the whereabouts of the man behind the Super Nintendo; *Street Fighter II*'s music (here we go again); addiction to games; and, of course, much, much more.

'A FAULT IN MARIO KART'

I am writing to tell you that I have found a fault in *Mario Kart*. The fault is slow-down, which is one of the problems on some other Super NES games. This problem only happens on the 150cc two-player mode, when both screens are full of sprites. The whole game slows down for a few seconds, which can be very annoying when you're in the lead. I have never heard of this fault in your, or anyone else's, review. This slow-down happens rarely. I think the game's brilliant apart from this fault.

Yours sincerely,
Alan Sheraton, Fleet.

Actually, we don't think that's why you wrote in at all. We think you wrote to point out that you'd made it to the 150cc circuits, something most of us haven't managed yet – as you well know.

'PURSUE AND LAUNCH'

I'd like to pick up on Adam Leitch's letter from the February issue. Although he does voice some very legitimate concerns, I don't think he has too much to worry about at the moment.

I think Nintendo are right to pull out of the CD-ROM market, for the time being at least. The SNES user base may be relatively small, but it is young, has the most potential for growth and is easily the most exciting of all the consoles currently on the market.

There's little point in writing off the other 32-bit systems because they're all bound to enjoy some degree of success. (Although, looking at the Lynx, it's difficult to say what the future holds for the Falcon and Jaguar.) But what's for certain is that it will take time for them to establish themselves, because the console and home computer markets are so firmly entrenched in the current favourites – namely the A500/600 and Mega Drive. But whereas Amiga programmers are showing a preference for 1 meg-only games, Sega have chosen to pursue and launch a new hardware add-on based around existing technology.

While many people are not yet prepared to embrace CD-ROM as the all-seeing, all-knowing oracle, it is widely regarded as the future of video games. There's certainly plenty of scope, but 16-bit technology isn't really equipped to make the most of it.

Nintendo, on the other hand, have wisely decided to kill two birds with one stone by developing a 32-bit CD-ROM. They are obviously working hard to get it right before release, so in the meantime they're stretching the boundaries of 16-bit, and simultaneously whetting our appetites with the introduction of the Super F/X and DSP in-cart chips. The Super Scope and mouse can only add to the equation – imagine a polygon-driven helicopter sim using the Scope to target and the mouse to control and select weapons. Wishful thinking, perhaps, but the reality could be closer than we think.

Mega CD games like *Night Trap* and *Sherlock Holmes* show a willingness to approach the subject from a different and innovative angle, but they're little more than glorified demos with limited lasting appeal. Until CD-ROM finds its niche, I think Nintendo's philosophy is the right one. Roll on *Star Force*!

Yours faithfully,
Julian Roche, Altrincham.

'WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...'

Whatever happened to the man who designed the Super NES and the original NES? Surely, by making such an invention, which has made Nintendo millions, he would have got a handsome pay packet. I heard a rumour that he hardly got paid anything, and lost everything.

Yours sincerely,
Chris Stacey, Colchester.

If the truth be known, we've heard that these days he's working in McDonalds in Wrexham.

'A LOT OF BAD CLONES'

I am an anime freak who buys all the videos from Japan, and who has recently seen an episode of *Ranma* which was subtitled to be sold abroad. What an excellent programme, I thought, and scraped together enough money to get *Ranma 1/2 Part 2*, even though I'm not a beat-'em-up fan.

This made me read your reviews on *Ken 6*, *Power Athlete* and *Brass Boss* in issue 4. I noticed you complaining about them being *Street Fighter II* clones. Why shouldn't they be? The style of *SFII* is brilliant, and I'm glad people are making games in the same style. I agree with what you're saying about the quality not being very good in Japanese beat-'em-ups, but if you look at the amount of Western ones that are good and the amount of Japanese ones that are just as good, the Jap ones win hands down. I think the Japanese games designers are working very hard, and the public are demanding a lot of new games in Japan, so I don't think we can blame them for having a lot of awful clones.

Yours faithfully,
Ben Flynn, Bracknell.

Not too sure what you're driving at here, Ben. You can't deny that all the games you mention are closely based on *Street Fighter II*, and to review them without mentioning this fact would be silly. And, by and large, they're not half as good as *Street Fighter II*. What could you possibly gain by buying a game that's basically a reworking of *Street Fighter II*... only worse? You can't fault *Super Play*'s logic, I'm afraid.

THE SUPER PLAY INTERESTING-O-METER

Your at-a-glance guide to the happening topics in Play Back.

HOT

- Anime
- Backlash to our reviews
- Game reviews
- What you want to see in *Super Play*

NOT

- Game prices
- Slow-down
- Hz, MHz, Mbits, etc
- Gardening

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'IT TAKES ME THREE MONTHS'

Having read your poll results in issue 4, I was amazed to see the amount of games people own, and the number they intend to purchase in the coming months. It takes me three months to save up for one.
Dean Fenner, Grimsby.

We were pretty amazed, too. But, as they say, that's show business.

'A LOAD OF OLD TOSH'

In your *Street Fighter II* vs *Mario Kart* feature in the February issue, you said that the *SFII* music was one of the conversion's weaker points. This is, quite frankly, a load of old tosh! It has been the general consensus of opinion in my circle of SNES-aholics, that *SFII*'s music on the SNES is not as tinny and tuneless as the arcade machines, but more upbeat, melodic and 'soulful'. Basically, the SNES music outshines the arcade music in every way. Whether this is because everyone is now so used to the SNES music is debatable, but I doubt this is the reason. When played head-to-head, the SNES *is* the *Champion Edition*. (Ha ha!)
Regards,
Charles Thornhill, Stockport.

Jason Brookes, *Super Play*'s sound 'n' music expert, replies: No it isn't.

'MY NAME IS TOM'

Hi! My name is Tom, I'm Japanese and I've got the Japanese version of *Super Mario Kart*. The message you were referring to in Mode 7 in issue 4, at the bottom of page 84, reads 'Back up RAM ni ghost o save shimas' in Japanese, which translates to 'The ghost has been saved in back-up RAM'.
Tom Kaneko, Beaconsfield.

'WRITE BACK AND EXPLAIN'

I think that you have fully under-rated *Super Mario Kart*, with its Mode 7 graphics, and all of the nice characters. Its rating should be in the 90s, but you gave it 89%. I know because I have got *Mario Kart*. Please could you write back and explain?
Darren Lingham, Newmarket.

Okay. We gave it 93%, not 89%.

'NEXT DOOR'S GRANNY'

I read with disbelief the latest media fad about computer games seriously damaging your health. Since the royal family split up, the tabloids have decided to create panic among parents, about the dangers and addiction of playing *Mario* and *SFII*.

Referring to games as 'Cocaine for kiddies' is completely misleading. Having played games for 10 years, I've yet to have an epileptic fit, and I still manage to have a social life. (Admittedly, I've probably spent more time searching for Princess Daisy than I have with my girlfriend lately.)

Games are compelling, but not physically addictive (with the exception of *Mario Kart*), and if people want to spend all night kicking Chun Li in the head, surely that's better than laying into next door's granny.

Anyway, keep up the good work. Since reading the anime feature I've purchased a couple of videos and I'm hooked – yet another way to waste my cash.
Yours faithfully,
Liam Walton, Kingswinford.

'JUST STARTED READING'

Please spare me some of your precious time. I've just started reading your mag, and I think it's the best out of all the ones I've seen. I just thought you would like to know this info. I've found out the average of each point in a review (issue 4). I know it's a bit stupid but I felt like it!

Average graphics: 72%
Average sound: 70%
Average gameplay: 61.6%
Average gamelife: 47.6%
Average overall: 65.1%

I don't think these scores are bad at all considering there were games such as *Pitfighter* and *Road Riot 4WD*! That's all.
Thanks,
G Boon, Stanley.

What a singularly odd thing to do.

'ANNOYINGLY LONG-WINDED'

The debate over the safety of so-called universal adaptors could, and probably will, go on for years. I have found (to my utter horror!) that using an adaptor with a battery back-up cartridge as the English security chip decoder, will sometimes wipe the memory of the game. (Not the game itself but, for example, the position you're at in *Zelda III*, or your racing scores in *F-Zero*.) This has not only happened to me, but my friend as well. We have different adaptors (he has a generic adaptor similar to the Q Systems one shown in issue 4, and I have a Datel Universal Adaptor), and have experienced this in different games. (I lost my position in *Mario World*, and he lost his character in *Zelda*.) I'm not trying to scaremonger, and I believe adaptors are great if used properly. My gripe with them is that a lot of younger SNES users may not realise the damage these adaptors can cause if they are not used properly. Their parents, more often than not, know even less, and look upon consoles as an expensive, but pretty much idiot-proof, toy.

What I'm trying to say (in an annoyingly long-winded way) is that these adaptors, and many carts and pieces of equipment, do not come with enough advice and warnings. My Datel adaptor had one photocopied sheet telling me how to use it, with no warnings. Most people haven't heard warnings not to pull carts out of the machine with the power on, or that if a cart is not pushed firmly home you'll get nothing but a blank screen.

My advice is (Wow! Are you still reading this letter?) that you should always make sure the cartridge is inserted the right way round, with the machine switched off, as far in as it will go. Don't move the console about while it is switched on, or switch it on when there is no game inserted. With

KINDLY LEAVE THE STAGE

In an attempt to disuade you from sending us jokes, we'll mark any printable ones out of 10 and send *Super Play* T-shirts to the senders of those scoring five or above.

Q What goes puff, puff, fssst?
A Robert Maxwell's last cigar.
Julian Roche, Altrincham.
2/10

Two strawberries are walking down the road. One says to the other: 'Where do you live?' The other replies: 'I'm not telling you! You might come round and nick my washing!'
Julian Roche, Altrincham.
0/10

Q What do you call a fish with no eyes?
A A fsh.
Melanie Drew, Keynsham.
0/10

Q What do you call two rows of cabbages?
A A dual cabbageway.
Sam Bridges, Sevenoaks.
0/10

If you really *must* send jokes to us, then this is the address: Kindly Leave The Stage, *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

'CUTE VOICES WOULDN'T SUIT AKIRA'

In issue 4 of *Super Play* I noticed a letter entitled 'Cuteness is lost'. The person who wrote this put across a very interesting point, about cuteness being lost in all British anime, because of the use of dubbed voices.

But while he was criticising Helen's views, he failed to see that cute voices wouldn't suit *Akira* or *Fist Of The North Star*. Has he not seen *Dominium Tank Police*? Island World did a very good job of dubbing voices on that film and there is no visual problem with voice sync.

Can you imagine *The Fist Of The North Star* fighting it out with voices that sounded like they were from a kiddie show! So leave Island World alone. I think they've done a very good job of getting some decent anime into the UK .
Yours sincerely,
Matthew Carl Rose, Wirral.

'THE BOTTOM'

I personally prefer manga films dubbed into English. I have watched both versions of the *Akira* film and I feel that the subtitles minimise the atmosphere because you have to keep looking down to the bottom of the screen to read the subtitles.
Yours,
Steven Kilmister, Yardley.

adaptors, be careful. Push the games on as far as they will go, check that they are the right way round and don't change games or jolt the carts with the power on. If your adaptor has a switch to select the foreign or UK game, don't switch it with the power on. (Holding reset and switching the game is not a good idea.)

I've lost hours worth of playing through my mistakes, and even a copy of *Mario World* which my mate fried by pulling it off an adaptor!

Yours sincerely,
Christopher Harris, Portsmouth.

'HAVING PROBLEMS THROWING A BOMB'

I am a gran of 76, and I felt I must write in to say how much we (my grandson and I) enjoy *Super Play*. We have had all the copies.

I am writing mainly because of your cover of *Zelda*. It is fantastic, and of course my grandson completed it – with your help. I am stuck on the last level (six) near the end.

I rang the Nintendo Helpline at one point as we were having problems throwing a bomb onto a conveyor belt. I was told it was only a matter of where you throw the bomb from. It was hopeless, so I rang again – to get the same reply. We were very frustrated.

One day, I was messing about. I made a block with the Staff of Sometia and, threw it on, and when it reached the switch it pressed it and it exploded and changed the colour. I couldn't believe how easy it was. Why haven't I seen it in any magazines? Surely other people have worked it out if I have.

Thank you once again for your lovely magazine. I used to get several, but now I don't need to spend the money if I get yours. I thus save up for more games. I wish you could twist their arms to get the prices down.

Yours sincerely,
Jean Portus, Blackpool.

We wouldn't normally leave in all the stuff about how wonderful we are (though we love reading it), but, well, we've been feeling a bit down in the dumps this month, and we needed a bit of gentle reassurance.

HIGHLIGHTS

'It would be great fun to play games with friends remotely.'
Peter Lee, Ipswich.

Er... yeah. (See Super Express this month.)

'Either I'm cracking up, or my eyesight's bad, but it seems that in every SNES mag, every cart is rated differently.'
Phil Harrison, Ashford.

You're absolutely right. Every magazine gives the same games different marks. Odd, isn't it?

'My friend thinks that Action Replay is illegal. Is he right?'
Luke Rose, Yeovil.

Not as far as we know, but see the bottom right of p19 in issue 5.

'I have only one complaint, and that is the item "Kindly Leave The Stage".'
Paul Johnson, Biggleswade.

We couldn't agree more. It's terrible, and we wish we'd never started it.

'I think you should only review games that score 70% and over.'
Jonathan Scotson, Paisley.

What do other readers think? (*Lynch him! – The Other Readers.*) That's settled, then.

Want to get something off your chest? Fancy winning a de-luxe *Super Play* pen? Why not kill two birds with one stone? Drop us a line and, if we print your letter, the pen's yours! The address to write to is:
PLAY BACK, SUPER PLAY,
30 MONMOUTH STREET,
BATH BA1 2BW.

SUPER PLAY ENVELOPE ART

Neil Devine, Wrexham, Clwyd.

Georgio Sfakiotakis, East Grinstead.

'The Ranma Man'(?), Hants.

The *Super Play* postbag's been looking an awful lot more cheerful since we invited you to decorate your envelopes. So we'd like you to keep doing it. (If you want to.) The address, as usual, is: PLAY BACK, *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

Picking a winner is virtually impossible in view of the exceptionally high quality of all the entries etc, etc, but in the end we decided to give this month's *Super Play* T-shirt to Neil Devine. Nice one, Neil.

SUPER

More FREE ADS! than you'd believe possible!

HARDWARE FOR SALE

- Datel Action Replay, as new, fully boxed, £25. Call Max on (0483) 32873.
- Atari Lynx for sale. Includes four good games, carry case, all the leads. Worth £265. Selling for £110-£150. Highest bidder wins. Tel: (0360) 440103.
- Atari 520 STE, good condition with 25+ games. Bargain at £130 ono. Tel: (0246) 412538.
- Amiga 500, 1 meg, joystick, mouse and Flightgrip, loads of games, £300 ono or swap for SNES with games. Tel: (0835) 63811.
- Super Atari Lynx with *California Games*, in perfect condition and boxed as new with adaptor, £50. Tel: (0932) 345168. If not in, leave message.
- Game Boy plus nine games for sale. £150. Tel: Carl (room 7A2) on (061) 445 8710.
- Commodore 64 for sale. 181 games, Action Replay, excellent condition, £175 ono. Tel: Sheffield 444358.
- Amiga 500 for sale. 1 meg RAM, two joysticks, mouse and mat. Loads of top games. £300 ono. Tel: (0384) 373721.
- Atari STE, 1 megabyte RAM, over 30 games and many magazines, one-year-old with another two years' guarantee. Worth over £500. Sell for £300. Tel: (081) 471 9854.
- Neo Geo for sale. Three games, two joypads and game card. £250 or swap for Super NES. Tel: (0252) 332712 after 6pm.
- Game Boy with *Duck Tales* game for sale, boxed as new, £50 or swap for SNES UK games, ie *Super Probotector* and *Final Fight* or *Turtles IV* and *Double Dragon*.
- Super NES, two joypads, convertor, 10 games, all in excellent condition + loads of mags thrown in free, £390 ono. Tel: (0749) 675036.
- PC Engine SCART plus seven games for £155 ono. Tel: (0604) 231337 after 5pm.
- Amiga 500, 1 meg, 28 games, disk box, mouse, two joysticks, £12 dust cover, 12 months old, good condition, only £280 ono. Genuine sale. (0536) 523492.
- 8-bit NES with two joypads and games inc. *Super Mario 1* and *3*, vgc, only five months old, £70. Phone (0734) 426081.
- Nintendo Game Boy, seven games, adaptor, carry case, all £65. Tel: (081) 861 4703 after 5pm.
- SNES for sale, £150 of games including *Street Fighter II*, *Addams Family* and *Super Tennis*. Tel: (0695) 571484.
- Game Gear for sale, includes *Sonic* and adaptor for £80 ono. Boxed with instructions. Unwanted Christmas present. Or swap for two Super NES games. Tel: (0495) 270697.
- SNES, one controller, *Street Fighter II*, boxed with all leads, £110. Only two months old!! Tel: (0483) 32873.
- Turbo Grafix 16-bit console + colour enhancement lead. SCART, with game. £80. Tel: (0935) 840658.
- SCART Mega Drive, PSU, two pads, six games

MARKET

Whether you're buying, selling, swapping or canoeing (*Eh? – Ed*), Supermarket has ads by the armful. Just fill in the form and send it to us.

inc. *Sonic*, *Gaires*, *Mercs*, *Devil Crash*, *Monaco*. Perfect cond., all boxed, instructions. Sell for £200 ono. Tel: (0923) 285766.

● Atari Lynx 2 with PSU and five games: *Blue Lightning*, *War Birds*, *Electrocop*, *Rampage*, *Cal. Games*. All boxed, good cond., £140 ono. Tel: (0923) 285766.

● Amiga 500+ for sale with mouse, joystick and 10 games, good condition, sell for £220. Tel: (081) 472 3337.

● Super Famicom (SCART), ex. condition, two joypads, PSU, all leads, *Mario 4*, *Super Ghouls 'n' Ghosts*, *UN Squadron*, all boxed, £130. Tel: (0892) 652040.

● Atari 520 STE, over 55 games plus Maverick 1 joystick and mouse, worth over £700, will sell for £250.

GAMES FOR SALE

● NES games for sale. Seven in total inc. *Double Dragon 1* and *2* and many more. Tel: (0256) 810513 after 3pm.

● Sex! Good word, eh! Jap Famicom games for sale. *Exhaust Heat* for £30, *Joe & Mac* (US) £25 and *Goeman Warrior* (Jap) for £15 ono. Tel: (081) 304 0934.

● *Sim City*, *F-Zero*, *Lambeer's Basketball*, US, used, £32. *Thunderspirits*, Jap, used, £25. Datel Universal Adaptor, new, unused, £15. US Ascii pad £20. Tel: (051) 426 0138.

● *WWF Super Wrestlemania* for sale. Boxed with instructions. Only £20. Tel: (081) 960 4096.

● *Axelay* for sale. Mint condition, bargain at £35. Or swap for US/UK *Super Aleste* (US version). Tel: (0371) 850963.

● *Turtles IV* (SNES) for sale. Tel: (081) 751 1358.

● *Turtles IV* for sale, £30 or swap for *Axelay*, *Sim City*, *Sonic Blast Man*. Will pay £35 for *Fatal Fury* or *King Of Monsters*. Tel: (041) 639 3783.

● SNES (US) games: *Desert Strike*, *Amazing Tennis*, *Pebble Beach Golf* and *NHLPA Hockey '93*. Will swap for any US games. Tel: (0268) 511674 after 6pm.

● Loads of US and Japanese SNES games priced between £20 and £30 each. Also I have hundreds of different console mags for sale. Tel: (0908) 367236.

● Amiga games for sale: *Premiere* £12, *Midnight Resistance* £5, *Toyota Celica GT Rally* £4, *James Pond* £4, *Speedball 2* £7, *Prince Of Persia* £5, *Captain Dynamo* £4 and *RBI 2* £5. Tel: (0642) 584821.

● For sale: *Super Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* (Jap) or *Top Racer* (Jap) £30 each. *Joe & Mac* (Jap) £25. Swap any for *Mario IV* (Jap) or other Jap titles. Tel: (051) 259 4139 5-9pm.

● SNES (UK) *WWF Wrestlemania* for sale £20 or exchange for *Super Mario World* (UK) or *Krusty's Fun House* (UK). Tel: (0874) 625251 between 4pm and 6pm.

● SNES games, *Pilotwings* and *Kick Off*, £25 each or exchange for any other English games. Tel: (0753) 860224.

● SNES *WWF Superstars* for sale. Offers around £25. Very good condition, unwanted gift. Tel: (0992) 554581.

● *Turtles IV*, brand new, will sell or swap for another game. Offers. Tel: (051) 932 1051.

● SNES games: US *Contra III*, *Gradius III*, UK *Lemmings*, *Axelay*, *Another World* £30 each. UK *F-Zero*, *Zelda III*, £25 each. Tel: (0483) 32873.

● I want to sell my Mega Drive games for £20 each: *Arrow Flash*, *Wrestle War*. Game Gear games for only £15 each: *Factory Panic*, *Columns*, *Pengo*. Famicom games for £30 each. Tel: (071) 582 5553.

● *Zelda III: A Link To The Past*, one month old, US version, £33. No offers. Tel: (0524) 414456.

WANTED

● Super NES and Mega Drive games. Will pay up to £25. Tel: (0463) 221173 after 7pm.

● Bought *Super Tennis* second hand. Need instruction book. Can anyone help? Tel: (0252) 623962 evenings/weekends.

● Members wanted for game swap club. Our details in exchange for your name and address. Tel: (0452) 503560 between 6-9pm.

● Wanted: UK or US SNES games. Will pay from £15 to £25. Tel: (0527) 32230.

● Nintendo Game Boy and SNES games wanted, sold and swapped. Tel: (0273) 593371 after 6pm.

● Wanted: *Turtles In Time*. Swap for *WWF*, *Dragon's Lair* or *Lemmings*. Tel: (0226) 285317.

● Badly wanted: good quality second-hand Super Famicom or American games, namely *Super Star Wars*, *Ranma 1/2*, *Axelay*. Cash paid. Tel: (031) 665 2070 after 4pm.

● *Super Mario Kart* US or Jap wanted. Will buy or swap for *Mario World* (Jap) and some cash. Tel: (0453) 824178.

● SF/SNES games wanted. For swap, sell, buy. Also PC Engine. Tel: (0909) 481741.

SWAP

● Swap UK *Wings II* for UK *Pilotwings*, *Super Soccer* or any UK game. Tel: (0977) 897768 after 6pm.

● Swap UK SNES + two joypads, leads etc. for American SCART SNES. Will pay p+p. Tel: (0709) 364494 daytime.

● Swap *Super Mario World* (PAL) for another SNES PAL game (esp *Super Probotector*, *Final Fight* or *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts*). Tel: (0865) 741648.

● Will swap *Super Castlevania IV* for almost any other SNES games. Tel: (0246) 412538.

● Will swap *UN Squadron* (US) and adaptor for *Super Aleste*, *Axelay* or *Smash TV* (UK). Will sell for £30. Tel: (081) 960 4096.

● Swap *Super Probotector* for *Actraiser*, *UN Squadron* or *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts*, UK versions only. Tel: (031) 455 7250.

● I have *F-Zero*, *Sim City* and *Kick Off*, all boxed UK. Swap for *Zelda III*, *Castlevania IV* or *Super Mario World*. Tel: (0534) 35037 after 6pm.

● I will swap *Kick Off* or *Super Tennis* for *Mario*, *Final Fight*, *Smash TV* or *Super Probotector*. Please tel: (0505) 683507 between 6-10pm.

● Swap UK SNES *Addams Family* for UK SNES *Sim City* or *Populous*. Must be boxed with instructions. Tel: (0642) 250313.

● Loads of Super NES games to exchange. I may even sell some. For a list, tel: (0232) 844473.

● Swap *Contra III* (US) for *Prince Of Persia* (US). Must be boxed and with instructions. Tel: (0823) 259063.

● Swap UK *Super Castlevania IV* and *Top Gear* for *Dragon's Lair* and *UN Squadron*. Also have *Super Mario World*. Consider any game. Ring (0532) 641725 after 6pm.

● Will swap UK *Mario IV* for a UK/Jap/US SNES game. Tel: (081) 788 0076.

● I will swap any of my games for the SNES for any of your games you've got to swap. Tel: (0224) 208831.

FANZINES

● New fanzine, *Ninsole* for Super NES. Loads of reviews and previews. Only 60p. Tel: (0670) 717705.

● *Super Format* is here! The newest and best fanzine for the SNES yet. First issue free! Tel: (044282) 7738.

MESSAGES AND EVENTS

● *City Hunter* comics, volume 1-27 (all Chinese translations), £40 the lot. Also, some Japanese animation music CDs for sale. £12 each. Tel: (071) 226 6275 before 8pm.

BOOK YOUR FREE AD HERE!

It's simple. Just fill in this form or a photocopy (in block caps please, and don't forget to add your phone number), stick it to the back of a postcard or envelope and send it to Supermarket, *Super Play*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. If you're under 18, please ask your parent or guardian to sign the coupon. *This service is only available to private advertisers.*

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WHAT CART?

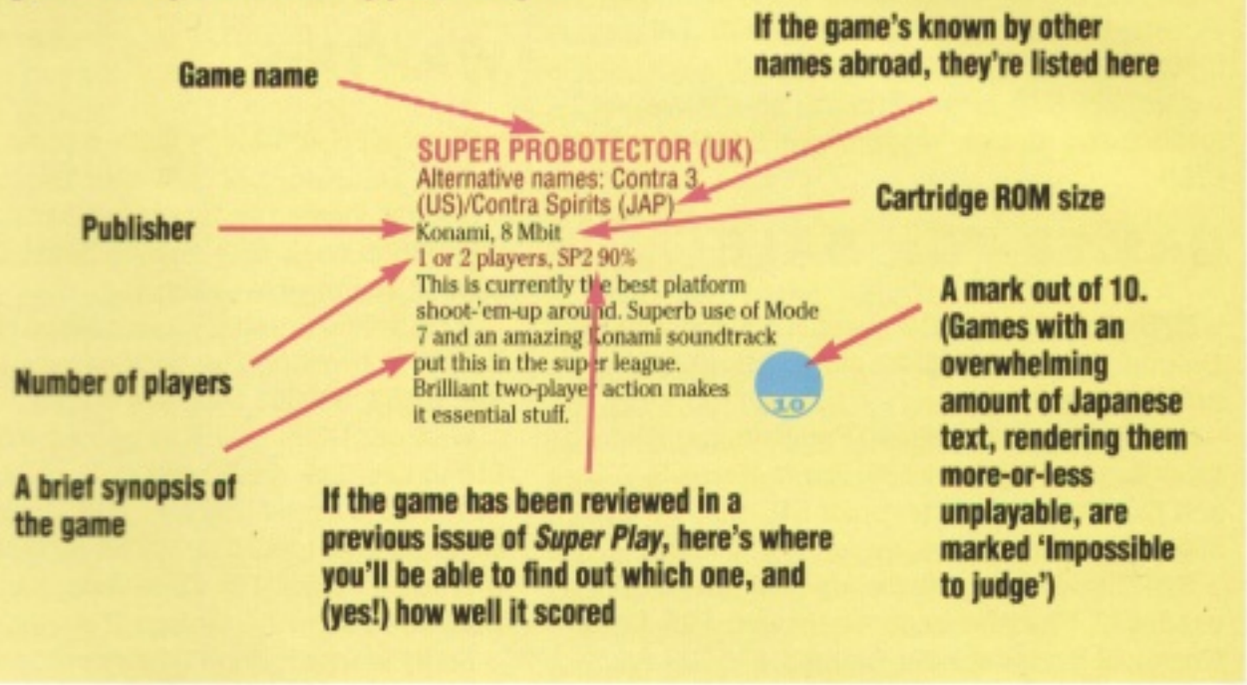
SUPER PLAY'S GAME LIBRARY

It's the *Encyclopedia Britannica* of Super Nintendo games! It's the *Who's Who?* of SNES carts! It's the scourge of *Super Play*'s Production Editor! It's being shamelessly ripped off in other mags across the nation! It's What Cart? – a complete listing of every Super Nintendo game available across the world! This month, for the first time, What Cart? is pushing the 200-game mark, rubbishing any suggestion that there aren't very many games on the Super Nintendo. It's easy to use, too. Just work out what letter the game you're interested starts with, turn to the appropriate page in What Cart?, and run your finger down the page till you find it. Simple!

● A surprisingly small number of people have taken us up on our challenge to tell us about games that have passed What Cart? by. And most of those who've done it have simply told us about brand new games we haven't had a chance to review yet. So come on, folks. We know there must be games out there we've missed. Send a brief What Cart?-style review to us at What Cart?, *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW, and you could win a fabulous *Super Play* T-shirt.

KEY TO YOUR CHART

You wouldn't believe how easy *What Cart?* is to understand. Perhaps this diagram might go some way to convincing you, though:


Game name
If the game's known by other names abroad, they're listed here
SUPER PROBOTECTOR (UK)
Alternative names: Contra 3 (US)/Contra Spirits (JAP)
Publisher
Konami, 8 Mbit
Cartridge ROM size
1 or 2 players, SP2 90%
This is currently the best platform shoot-'em-up around. Superb use of Mode 7 and an amazing Konami soundtrack put this in the super league. Brilliant two-player action makes it essential stuff.
10
Number of players
A mark out of 10. (Games with an overwhelming amount of Japanese text, rendering them more-or-less unplayable, are marked 'Impossible to judge')
A brief synopsis of the game
If the game has been reviewed in a previous issue of Super Play, here's where you'll be able to find out which one, and (yes!) how well it scored

ACROBAT MISSION (JAP)
Teichiku, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 38%
A despicably feeble vertical scroller. (Not a good start.) **3/10**

ACTRAISER (JAP/US/UK)
Enix/Quintet, 6/8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 90%
A brilliant combination of strategy and platform action. Graphically it's well done, but the visuals are left eating dust by the fab music. Buy the UK or US version. **9/10**

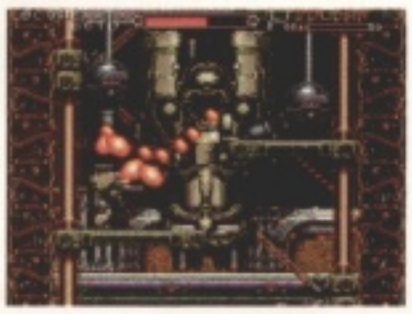
THE ADDAMS FAMILY (JAP/US/UK)
Ocean, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 82%

A polished and enjoyable romp. A large game, featuring well-integrated adventure, puzzle and shoot-'em-up elements, providing an addictive challenge that gets very frustrating in places, although a password system allows for quick completion. **8/10**

AIR MANAGER (JAP)
Koei, 8 Mbit + BB
1 to 4 players
Unfortunately unintelligible unless you're fluent in Japanese, this is a quite well presented business strategy thing along the lines of *Railroad Tycoon*. Nice Mode 7 intro. Impossible to judge. **?/10**

ARCANA (US)
Alternative name: Card Master (JAP)
HAL, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
An RPG based around a 3D perspective (like *Dungeon Master*) sounds good, but it suffers from a very plodding pace – the combat scenes are particularly long and drawn out. Graphically it's not bad, and the music is well done, but only really recommended for die-hard RPG fans. **6/10**

ASSAULT SUITS VALKEN (JAP/US)
Alternative name: Cybernator (US)
NCS Masiya. 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 91%



The (imaginary) principle of assault suits is a fab basis for a game, but, oddly, this is the first to properly take advantage of it. The result is a brilliant (and very Japanese) shoot-'em-up, dripping with high technology and boasting some very satisfying explosions. **9/10**

ASTRAL BOUT (JAP)
A-Wave, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A wrestling/fighting game, and not a very good one at that. Graphically not a complete disaster, but the sprite collision and playability are very ropy. When you think you could buy *Street Fighter II* instead, what's the point? **4/10**

AUGUSTA MASTERS 3D GOLF (JAP)
T&E Soft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 to 4 players
The first 3D golf game on the Super Famicom, and still rather good despite Japanese text. Graphically, it's a mixture of bit-maps and polygons and it works quite well. The screen update could be faster, though. **8/10**

AXELAY (JAP/US/UK)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 85%
Okay, so *Axelay*'s a little thin gameplay-wise. But – ooh! – those graphics! They're possibly the most impressive ones ever! There are also some mind-boggling baddies, and the game alternates between neat horizontal and vertical scrolling. **8/10**

BART'S NIGHTMARE (US/UK)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 91%
The formula may not sound promising – lots of little sub-games rather than one big one – but this is absolutely superb, and very weird. Wonderful graphics and lots of humour, and it's challenging. **9/10**

BATTLEBLAZE (JAP)
Sammy Corp, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
An awkward game that's nowhere near as good as its contemporaries (*Street Fighter II* and *Ranma 1/2*). The graphics are okay, the sound's okay, but the gameplay's dire. There's quite a reasonable range of moves, but you could do much better. **5/10**

BATTLE CLASH (US)
Nintendo, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 48%
This is the first stand-alone game released for the Super Scope. A shame that it's so short lived and awful. Cheaper than your average import, though. **4/10**

BATTLE GRAND PRIX (JAP)
Naxat, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Remember *Super Sprint*, the coin-op? Well, imagine a version of it (ie an overhead view driving game) where you can only see a tiny area of the track around your car, and have to rely on little signals to warn you of corners. We had a bit of trouble with this one, eventually coming to the conclusion that it's 'challenging'. Lots of babes in it, though. **6/10**

BEST OF THE BEST (US)
Electro Brain, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP5 50%
Let's be honest: this is a kick boxing game, not a karate one. Treated as such it gets the job done pretty well. But, as with any game that comes within a mile of the word 'boxing', it gets boring fast. **5/10**

BIG RUN (JAP)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 player
After a promising start, the abysmal graphics and virtually non-existent gameplay make for what is surely the worst driving game on the system. (Nothing like the original coin-op.) **2/10**

BILL LAIMBEER'S COMBAT BASKETBALL (US)
Hudson Soft, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Originally an Amiga game called *Future Basketball*, this plodding speedball clone is a surprisingly poor release from Hudson Soft. **3/10**

BLAZEON (JAP/US)
Atlus, 8 Mbit
1 player
A tacky horizontal scroller with anime-style robots in. It's kinda different, but everything's so crude and jerky. That makes this game crap – there are so many better shoot-'em-ups to choose from. **3/10**

BOMBUZAL (JAP)
Alternative name: Ka-Blooey (US)
Kemco, 4 Mbit
1 player
Clear bombs from mazes of tiles by setting off chain reactions, without getting blown up. The levels are well designed and it takes skill to negotiate them. But unfortunately the graphics are dreary, and the game's boring. **4/10**

BRASS BOSS (JAP)
Lazersoft, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 56%

Another *Street Fighter II* wannabe that doesn't make the grade. Some of the graphics are okay, and for the most part it plays all right, but *SF II* does it all so much better. **5/10**

BULLS VS BLAZERS (US)
Electronic Arts, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP5 83%
A good, solid basketball game which places the emphasis on accuracy and detail at the expense of slick graphics. Very challenging. **8/10**

CACOMA KNIGHT (JAP)
Datam, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 36%

A tedious variant of *Painter*, the ancient coin-op. It does its best to brighten up proceedings with some special backdrops, but even they're not very good. **3/10**

CAMELTRY (JAP)
Alternative name: On The Ball (US)
Taito, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 52%
The idea of a rotating Mode 7 maze with a ball bouncing around it is a good one, but Taito haven't got the most from it. The levels are too easy to complete, and once you've seen them all you won't return. **5/10**

CAPTAIN TSUBASU 3 (JAP)
Tecmo, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players
Yikes! A football management game, based on a Jap comic hero! Some dynamic match highlights, but unless you can read Japanese, and have tons of patience, stay away. Impossible to judge. **?/10**

CAVEMAN NINJA 2 (JAP)
Data East, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 58%
The sequel to *Joe & Mac* (sort of),

reasonably playable, and offers a fair amount of long-term challenge. There's nothing outstanding about it, though, and there are hundreds of better games around. 5/10

CB WARS (JAP)
Banpresto, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A strange anime scroll-along-and-whack-nasties-with-whatever-you-can-find type of game. RPG elements and lots of Japanese text render this a poor choice for most people. Impossible to judge. ?/10

CHESSMASTER (US)
Mindscape, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players

You don't have much choice of SNES chess games. This plays a strong game (we, er, think), but there's room for improvement. It's awfully presented, and the tunes after each move are irritating. 5/10

CHUCK ROCK (US)
Sony Imagesoft, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP4 61%
A well put together Stone Age platform game, with lots of imagination and fun touches, but ultimately it's all a bit bland and dull. 6/10

COMBATRIBES (JAP)
Technos, 12 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A dull beat-'em-up that makes no attempt to save itself with any pick-upable weapons or interesting levels. 5/10

COSMO GANG (JAP)
Namco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 70%
A *Galaga*-style shoot-'em-up that doesn't match up to the ancient coin-op in the gameplay stakes. A fun two-player mode, and some lovely graphics and sound, but spoilt by infinite continues. 7/10

DARIUS TWIN (JAP/US)
Taito, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Lacking in levels for a *Darius* game – but this isn't all bad news. Good graphics, okay sound and not too much slow-down make it a reasonable buy, though it's not challenging in the first few levels. 7/10

DAVID CRANE'S AMAZING TENNIS (JAP/US)
Absolute Entertainment, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 80%
At first this looks like the best tennis game yet. The 3D perspective works well – until you take control of a player at the other end. A restricted viewpoint makes it hard to serve and return – a split screen perspective would have been better. It's good, but *Super Tennis* rules. 8/10

DESERT STRIKE (US/UK)
Electronic Arts, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP4 90%
An incredibly addictive chopper-based shoot-'em-up with helicopteriness pouring out of its ears. Exactly like flying round a desert blowing things up with missiles (only not quite so hot and sandy). 9/10

D FORCE (JAP/US)
Asmik, 8 Mbit
1 player
An absolutely appalling shoot-'em-up with maybe the worst graphics, sound and playability on the SNES. Subtle use of Mode 7 gives the useless visuals a blocky appearance. Dreadful sound, too. Avoid! 2/10

DINOSAURS (JAP)
Alternative name: Dino City (US)
Irem, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 83%
One of our favourite platform games, this has fab graphics, cute characters and plenty of amusing bits. But it's too easy to finish. We love it anyway. 8/10

DIRTY CHALLENGER (JAP)
Yutaka, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Yet another dire wrestling game. This time it includes some very dubious 'grapples' – you could be mistaken for thinking it was all a bit, well, dirty. 3/10

DRAGON BALL Z (JAP)
Bandai, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
The original Japanese *Dragon Ball* anime series has appeared on the 8-bit Famicom (NES), but this new version is the first available for the Super Famicom. An RPG with combat scenes and loads of Japanese text. Extremely 8-bit in look too. Impossible to judge. ?/10

DRAGON'S LAIR (US/UK)
Elite, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP1 82%

This looks absolutely gorgeous, plays well and is far better than the straight conversion of the coin-op that some other machines have suffered. But the frustrating difficulty level hides a game not as lengthy as it might have been. 8/10

DRAGON QUEST V (JAP)
Enix, 12 Mbit + BB
1 player
The biggest selling game in Japan to date is a sprawling RPG crammed full of text boxes and, of course, plenty of Japanese text to be translated for an American release this year in the *Dragon Warrior* series. It's primitive looking, and very Japanese. Impossible to judge. ?/10

DRAKKHEN (JAP/US/UK)
Kemco, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP4 64%
Based on a French 16-bit computer RPG/adventure, this has reasonable graphics but an awful combat system. Most people will find this a real bore – even avid RPG fans – but if you *are* tempted, make sure you get the US or UK version. 6/10

EARTHLIGHT (JAP)
Hudson Soft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
Based on a popular PC Engine game called *Nectaris*, this is an interplanetary space strategy affair, but there's enough Japanese in here to make it tricky to work out. Avoid. Impossible to judge. ?/10

EXTRA INNINGS (US)
Alternative name: Ganba League Baseball (JAP)
Sony Imagesoft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP2 64%

Baseball's tricky to translate well to a games machine, but this probably makes the best job of it, with cute characters and slick action. If you really *must* have a baseball game, then go for this one. 6/10

F-1 EXHAUST HEAT (JAP/UK)
Alternative names: F1 ROC (US)
Ocean/Seta, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 69%
Your car's a bit small, and you don't get much warning of corners. But at least you get a 3D view of the track. Not our fave game, but some people love it. 6/10

FACEBALL 2000 (US)
Bullet-Proof Software, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 54%
On the Game Boy this 3D maze shoot-'em-up is pretty good fun, but the Super Nintendo conversion suffers badly. Slow, jerky 3D and confusing with two players. Not recommended. 5/10

FATAL FURY (JAP)
Takara, 12 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 76%
One of a growing number of *Street Fighter II* look-a-likes, and probably the next best thing to The Big One. Looks okay, plays fine (though the controls are very awkward) and worth considering. 7/10

FINAL FANTASY II (US)
Alternative name: Final Fantasy IV (JAP)
Square Soft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
A strange one this, as in Japan it's the fourth in a very popular series. This is the first version to make it to the SNES, and while it's graphically basic, the lovely music and the involving nature of the quest lift it way above lesser RPGs. 8/10

FINAL FANTASY V (JAP)
Square Soft, 16 Mbit + BB
1 player
A huge-selling RPG to be translated and retitled *Final Fantasy III* in the US. Buy that, unless you read Japanese. Impossible to judge. ?/10

FINAL FANTASY: MYSTIC QUEST (US)
Square Soft, 4 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP3 79%
A spin-off younger players' version of the popular *Final Fantasy* RPG series that proves to be an enjoyable and involving quest for role-playing beginners. Much cheaper than most releases, too. 7/10

FINAL FIGHT (JAP/US/UK)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 86%

The best walking-along-beating-people-up game on the SNES. Brilliant graphics, varied opposition and devastating moves. But, it lacks a two-player mode, and so gets dull in the long-term. 8/10

FINAL FIGHT GUY (JAP)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player
A pointless new version of *Final Fight* where the best character, Cody, gets the chop, and Guy replaces him. A poor game-music CD is included. The game is slightly easier than the original. 8/10

FIRE DODGEBALL (JAP)
Sunsoft, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A cute, anime version of a very weird game (see *SD Dodgeball* for details). The graphics are pretty good, but the game itself is a bit too simple to be particularly rewarding. The lengthy intro sequences before each game don't help, either. 6/10

F-ZERO (JAP/US/UK)
Nintendo, 4 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP1 86%
A fabulous Mode 7 racing game. Dead fast and dead smooth. And dead deadly, if you don't watch out for the vicious computer-controlled hover cars. Bland scenery and an unlikely futuristic setting are unfortunate, but it's an impressive demonstration of just what the Super Nintendo can do. 8/10

GEORGE FOREMAN'S KO BOXING (US)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 18%
Boxing games are invariably awful – but this awful? 1/10

GOLDEN FIGHTER (JAP)
Culture Brain, 12 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 42%
A very ropy *Street Fighter II* 'tribute'. The graphics are rubbish, the gameplay's rubbish, the sound's rubbish... Avoid. 4/10

GPX CYBER FORMULA (JAP)
Alternative name: Cyberspin (US)
Takara, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 70%
A top-view scroller, with no warning of corners. With anime characters and cars. And really smooth scrolling. Average. 6/10

GRADIUS III (JAP/US)
Konami, 4 Mbit
1 player
Similar to the coin-op and – astonishingly – all packed onto a 4 meg cart, this is one to check out. It's an early title, so slow-down is a problem – it rather scuppers the otherwise beautiful graphics and powerful sound. Still, it's more impressive and playable than *Super R-Type*. 7/10

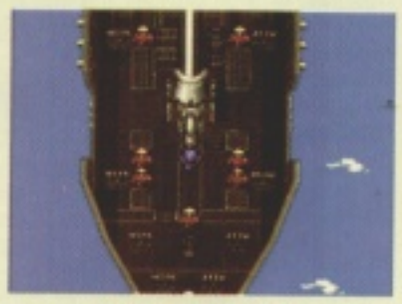
GUNDAM F-91 (JAP)
Bandai, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
A massive selling (in Japan at least) arcade/ strategy game-thing, with Japanese text. Still it's playable if you are willing to persevere, but essentially this is one for real robot fans only. Impossible to judge. 6/10

INDEPENDENT SUPER NINTENDO MAGAZINE
SUPER PLAY

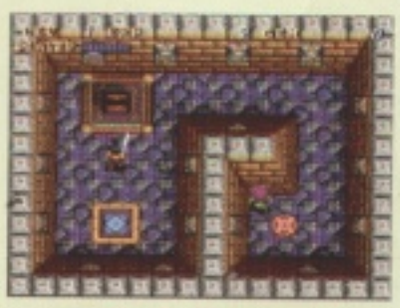
TOP 5 RPGS

We sat our resident RPG expert Jonathan Davies down with a bundle of games and asked him to choose his favourites. A week later, bleary-eyed and mumbling, he came up with these...

1 ZELDA III: A LINK TO THE PAST (93%)
Who would have thought that an RPG could be this much fun? It's big, It's challenging – if a little on the easy side.



2 FINAL FANTASY II
Very popular series in Japan. Simplistic graphics, but an involving and challenging quest, make this one of the best RPGs.



3 SOUL BLAZER (89%)
Check out our player's guide on page 58 for more on this excellent, but slightly weird, adventure game. Not a classic, but fun to play.

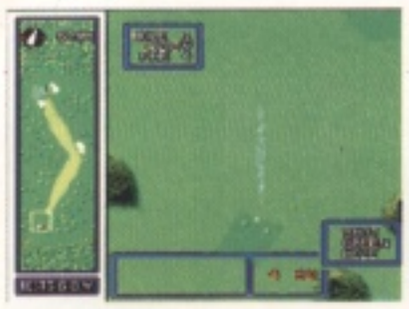
4 YS III
Looking slightly dated now and lacking in scope when compared to the original *Ys* games, but still fun to play, if you can live with the slightly ropy graphics.

5 FINAL FANTASY: MYSTIC QUEST (79%)
This is a smart and very enjoyable game, but for an RPG there's not nearly enough gameplay, and consequently you'll finish it far too quickly.

GUNFORCE (JAP/US)
Irem, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 59%
Similar to *Super Probotector* in many respects, but not half as good in any of them. The 'respects', that is. (Sorry, that was a bit confusing, wasn't it?)
6/10

HAT TRICK HERO (JAP)
Alternative name: Super Soccer Champ (US)
Taito, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A slick conversion of the coin-op *Football Champ*. It's incredibly fast, but rather too easy in one-player mode – you'll need to play a chum to have any fun. Not as good as *Super Soccer*.
7/10

HOLE-IN-ONE GOLF (JAP/US)
HAL, 8 Mbit
1 to 4 players



A fairly old game, but still one of the best golf sims available – what it lacks in technical ingenuity, it makes up for in user friendliness. The overhead view used isn't much like playing the real game, but nice Mode 7 course introductions help – as does turning the music off!
7/10

HOME ALONE (JAP/US/UK)
THQ, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP 36%
A dire attempt to cash in on the success of the movie. Hopeless graphics and sound do nothing to rescue the banal gameplay from the claws of drudgery and tedium. A waste of money.
3/10

HOME ALONE 2 (US)
THQ, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 32%
We actually preferred the first *Home Alone* game to this, but in the same way that we prefer *Eldorado* to *Santa Barbara*. Another dire scrolling effort that should be left on the shelf. Feeble and predictable.
3/10

HOOK (US/JAP)
Sony Imagesoft, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 72%

Slow-moving, but otherwise an attractive platformer that ties in with the film quite neatly. It's a bit easy to finish, though, so it'll be no, er, Peter Pan.
7/10

HUMAN GRAND PRIX (JAP)
Human, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP4 82%
If you can live with the 'unique' control system, this is far and away the best Formula 1 game on the SNES. It's blindingly fast, with realistic handling and a useful two-player option.
8/10

HYPERZONE (JAP/US)
Hal, 8 Mbit
1 player
A poor 3D space shoot-'em-up using Mode 7, but with nothing else to recommend it. Tedium City is your only destination with this one.
3/10

THE IREM SKINS GAME (US)
Alternative name: Major Title (JAP)
Irem, 8 Mbit,
1 or 2 players, SP3 83%
Fans of the coin-op golf game *Major Title* will love this – it's virtually identical in every way. Admirers of *Pebble Beach* and its cousins mightn't be that impressed by its accuracy, however.
8/10

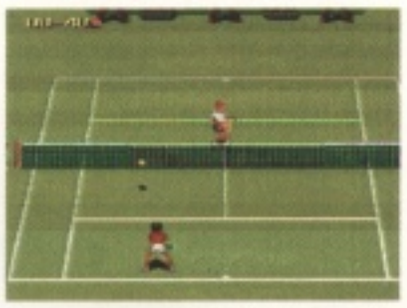
JACK NICKLAUS GOLF (US)
Tradewest, 4 Mbit
1 to 4 players, SP3 62%
Fans of golf games that present things from just behind the player will like the look of this, but the painfully slow way it draws the screen before each shot, not to mention the could-be-better power meter, muck everything up. Not one of our favourites, but it will find its supporters.
6/10

JAKI CRUSH (JAP)
Naxat, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 74%
The SNES desperately needs a top-notch pinball game – something to rival the Mega Drive's *Devil Crash* and the Amiga's *Pinball Dreams*. But this isn't it. It's pretty reasonable on the whole, but the ball moves much too slowly, and the table isn't brilliantly designed.
7/10

JAMES BOND JR (US/UK)
THQ, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 29%
A platform and shooting action game from hell that even the Amstrad GX4000 wouldn't have tolerated. Poor graphics, feeble sound and banal gameplay. Look, but don't touch. (On second thoughts, don't bother looking.)
2/10

JERRY BOY (JAP)
Alternative name: Smartball (US)
Sony Imagesoft, 8 Mbit
1 player
A run-of-the-mill platform game with only its blob-shaped hero to distinguish it from the crowd. Very average.
6/10

JIMMY CONNORS' PRO TENNIS TOUR (US/UK)
UBI Soft, 4 Mbit
1 to 4 players, SP5 88%



Not *quite* as good as *Super Tennis*, but it comes dammed close in every respect. It also has the massive advantage of being compatible with the four-player adaptor. Now that *is* fun.
8/10

JOE AND MAC (JAP/US/UK)
Data East/Elite, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 72%
A good conversion of the original arcade machine, with a few bits missing, and a few more added. Graphically it's colourful, but the tunes don't vary and the gameplay becomes repetitive. Not much of challenge, but young players should enjoy it.
7/10

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL (US)
Alternative name: Pro Football (JAP)
Electronic Arts, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
What was a fab game on the Mega Drive and Amiga doesn't work on the SNES. Note the uninspiring graphics and really jerky scrolling. It *is* fast, but, unfortunately, at the expense of playability.
5/10

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL '93 (US/UK)
Alternative name: Pro Football '93 (JAP)
Electronic Arts, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 83%
...whereas this new, improved, updated version is loads better. The changes are mostly cosmetic, but they're enough to elevate the game to the status of 'recommended (if you like American football)'.
8/10

KICK OFF (JAP/UK)
Anco/Imagineer, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP3 52%
The most controversial computer game ever gets its second conversion to the SNES, and suffers as a result. Not as bad as *Pro Soccer*, but still flawed playability-wise.
5/10

KIKIKAIKAI (JAP)
Natsume, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP5 82%

This is the sort of game only the Japanese could write. Underneath the perilously weird exterior lurks an immensely enjoyable two-player shoot-'em-up with neat graphics and a large playing area.
8/10

KING OF THE MONSTERS (JAP)
Takara, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A fairly enjoyable Neo Geo game that seems to have been clumsily converted to the SNES. It's really too dull and unimpressive to get even fans of the original excited.
5/10

KOSHIYEN 2 (JAP)
KAC, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 70%
This would be the most bog standard baseball game except that it's very weird and very Japanese. Not bad, overall.
7/10

KRUSTY'S SUPER FUN HOUSE (US/UK)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 79%
A curious blend of pie-throwing, puzzle-solving and platform action make this a refreshing challenge. Graphics and sound are reasonable, but it's the excellently paced gameplay that makes the game. Passwords should be given more regularly to reduce repetition though.
7/10

KUNIO KEN (JAP)
Technos, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
An odd mix of beat-'em-up and adventure game. We had fun with it, beating people with pillows and suitcases, but we didn't have a clue what was going on as it's all in Japanese. You might be able to suss it out, but it got a lukewarm reception even in Japan.
?/10

LAGOON (JAP/US)
Kemco, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player

A fairly involving RPG, taking some elements from the *Zelda* series, but forgetting a lot of the more important ones – including a map, which can prove extremely irritating in certain areas. However, the graphics and sound are pleasant enough. Worth considering, but only after you've played *Zelda*, *Final Fantasy II* and *Soul Blazer*.
7/10

LAST FIGHTER TWIN (JAP)
Banpresto, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Super Deformed robots in a side-on beat-'em-up. Nice graphically and sonically, but limited all the same. For SD fans only.
6/10

LEGEND OF THE MYSTICAL NINJA (US)
Alternative name: Goeman 3 (JAP)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
One of the best games for the system, mixing RPG adventure-style wandering with side-on platform action. Wonderful oriental music, beautiful graphics and an addictive challenge. Though the Jap version is accessible, buy the US cart to get the best value from this.
9/10

LEMMINGS (JAP/US/UK)
Sunsoft, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 86%
A hit on every format it's been released on. It takes a while to get to grips with, but *Lemmings* is one of the most original, ingenious and addictive games ever. Each level has a password, and there are loads of them (more than, for example, the Amiga version). A *Super Play* favourite, so you've really got to buy this.
8/10

MAGICAL GUY ADVENTURE (JAP)
Bandai, 4 Mbit
1 player
A jolly platform game combining wacky Japanese humour with cute sprites and backdrops. Not in the class of *Super Mario World*, but entertaining anyway.
6/10

MAGIC SWORD (JAP/US)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player
Capcom's first disappointing release – not surprising when the original arcade game was so awful. Instead of improving the gameplay for the SNES version, the programmers have simply translated the original. A bodge job on the whole, with mixed quality graphics and bad slow-down.
6/10

MARIO PAINT (JAP/US)
Nintendo, 8 Mbit + BB
1 'player'
A painting and music package that's really only for youngsters. It's very basic (only 16 colours? On a system with thousands?) and once you've drawn something, what do you do with it? It's free with the Nintendo mouse – but wait until that's on sale separately.
3/10

METAL JACKET (JAP)
Atlus, 8 Mbit
1 player
A horrible experience. Atlus aren't doing themselves any favours attempting a platform game – a genre where you have to be really good to stand out. This is an *E-SWAT* clone with stilted animation, dire sound and inept gameplay.
2/10

MICKEY'S MAGICAL QUEST(JAP/US)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 89%

One of the most polished platformers around, though it's marred by the inclusion of infinite continues. Stunning backdrops, sprites and varied enough to impress anyone – it's just a shame it's too easy.
9/10

MUSYA (JAP)
Datam, 8 Mbit
1 player
One of the worst Super Famicom games ever – though it's up against stiff competition. Initially, the nicely shaded backdrops give it the look of a *Ninja Spirit* clone, but when you see your hero mince along and twiddle his stick, it palls.
3/10

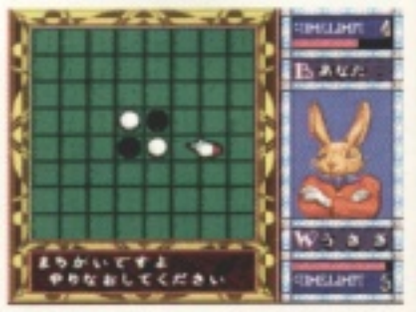
NHLPA HOCKEY (US/UK)
Electronic Arts, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 87%
Not *quite* as good as the Mega Drive version (the graphics are a bit jerky, though you wouldn't notice unless you'd seen the original). Still a great ice hockey game, though, with loads of playability and atmosphere.
8/10

NOLAN RYAN'S BASEBALL (US)
Romstar, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 75%
Just as slick as *Extra Innings*, but without the cute characters, and it's slightly trickier to control. Still, not a bad game.
7/10

NORTH STAR KEN V (JAP)
Toei, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
This addition to an inexplicably popular range of *Zelda*-style FRP's – it's based on *Fist Of The North Star*, believe it or not – looks, to the untrained British eye at least, like a big pile of steaming nob. If you speak Japanese it might, of course, be completely brilliant, but we very much doubt it. Impossible to judge.
7/10

NORTH STAR KEN 6 (JAP)
Toei, 12 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 42%
'Massive sprites, massive sprites... er... massive sprites?' says Jason. What we think he means is that this has massive sprites but nothing much to actually do. Another failed *Street Fighter II*-a-like.
4/10

OTHELLO WORLD (JAP)
Tsukuda, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players



Plays a strong game of *Othello* (if you set it to 'difficult'), looks good, and has some cute bits. But why would anyone want to spend $40 on a cartridge that plays *Othello*? Fine for brushing up your technique, but otherwise very sad.
6/10

OUT OF THIS WORLD (US)
Alternative names: Outer World (JAP), Another World (UK)
Interplay, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 81%
The graphics in this one are superb – playing it is just like watching a film. The action is varied, and there are lots of great cinema-style close-up shots, but there isn't enough there to make it a classic.
8/10

PAPER BOY 2 (US/UK)
Mindscape, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP2 29%
In this game you're a newspaper delivery boy (or girl) and the object is to cycle along, er, delivering newspapers. There are some obstacles to avoid, things to hit with papers for bonus points, and that's about it. It's horribly boring, and really can't be recommended.
2/10

PEBBLE BEACH GOLF LINKS (JAP/US)
T&E Soft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 to 4 players, SP3 82%
The third addition to the 3D golf series, and unsurprisingly very similar to the others. Accurate down to the waves on the beach, but the porn movie music is laughable.
8/10

PGA TOUR GOLF (JAP/US/UK)
Electronic Arts, 4 Mbit
1 to 4 players, SP5 60%
Slick presentation, but it masks the fact that this is a poor SNES conversion of an otherwise excellent sports game. On other systems *PGA Tour* is *the* golf sim, but here EA's lack of SNES expertise scuppers things. Still, you could do worse.
6/10

PHALANX (JAP/US)
Kemco, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 70%
Horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-ups are two a penny on the Super Nintendo, and a new contender really has to do something different to stand out. This one has some decent graphics and challenging gameplay, but at the end of the day is pretty forgettable.
7/10

PILOTWINGS (JAP/US/UK)
Nintendo, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP1 92%
SNES-owning aviation fans aren't spoilt for choice at present, but this should be

enough to, er, spin their propellers for now. It has a huge range of flying machines (from parachutes to helicopters), and super-smooth 3D graphics, and there's even a decent game in here, too.

9/10

PIPEDREAM (JAP)
Bullet-Proof Software, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 66%
A well turned-out puzzle game where you've got to link different shaped bits of pipe. Okay, but it gets boring without ever being that exciting to start with.

6/10

PITFIGHTER (US/UK)
THQ, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 14%
An appalling conversion of a popular coin-op. Dire graphics and awful gameplay. The pits.

1/10

POPULOUS (JAP/US/UK)
Imagineer, 4 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 85%
The original Japanese version of a classic UK game that puts you in the shoes of God Almighty himself. A smashing game, though it *can* get frustrating (and quite boring) eventually.

8/10

POWER ATHLETE (JAP)
Kaneco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 49%
Another attempt to cash in on *Street Fighter II* that doesn't really work. 'Crap – but in a groovy kind of way', apparently.

5/10

PRINCE OF PERSIA (JAP/US/UK)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 89%
A superb conversion of the computer classic with new graphics, a brilliant intro and a fab *Lawrence Of Arabia*-style soundtrack. Not an easy game, but the password system allows progression without too much trouble. A classic.

9/10

PRO SOCCER (JAP)
Alternative name: World League Soccer (US)
Imagineer, 4 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players
A really shaky conversion of *Kick Off*, with crude graphics and hopeless gameplay.

3/10

PUSHOVER (US/UK)
Ocean, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP3 78%
An enjoyable domino toppling-style puzzle game, converted from home computers, with lots of short-term fun. Once all 100 levels are completed, however, it's unlikely you'll ever return to it.

7/10

Q*BERT 3 (JAP/US)
NTVIC, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 67%
Real nostalgia value, as players of the 10-year-old coin-op will confirm. And plenty of effort's gone into making it look the part. But it's only mildly amusing.

6/10

RACE DRIVIN' (US/UK)
THQ, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP3 35%
Fans of the original coin-op will be horrified by this driving game. 3D polygons and the SNES go together like, um, chips and custard. Poor programming on unsuitable hardware.

3/10

RAIDEN DENSETSU (JAP)
Alternative name: Raiden Trad (US)
Toei, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players

A great game on the PC Engine and Mega Drive, but slow on the SNES and not recommended. It should have been a good game, but, sadly, isn't...

4/10

RAMPART (US)
Electronic Arts, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 79%
So primitive-looking you wonder why it was allowed to live. (Well, apart from the great 3D bit.) But a few minutes playing reveal a game that's actually fab fun, and two-player mode almost rivals *Mario Kart*.

8/10

RANMA 1/2 (JAP)
NCS Masiya, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players

A neat one-on-one beat-'em-up with some very odd anime characters (who change sex when they get wet, and sometimes into giant pandas – don't worry, there's a Japanese TV series which explains it all). Mismatching of characters can be a problem, but on the whole it's great to look at and play.

8/10

RIVAL TURF (JAP/US/UK)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 58%
Final Fight's main rival. Not as 'together' as its opponent – more repetitive baddies and rougher animation are the main qualms – but it has the enormous advantage of simultaneous two-player action, including a *Street Fighter II*-style head-to-head mode. Which one do you go for? Um, well there's always *Turtles*...

6/10

ROAD RIOT (US)
THQ, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 20%
Road Riot's the worst driving game on the Super Nintendo, we reckon. This is really primitive in every respect, despite a split-screen two-player mode, and absolutely no fun at all.

2/10

ROAD RUNNER: DEATH VALLEY RALLY (JAP/US)
Sunsoft, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP4 42%
The atmosphere of the cartoon is captured perfectly, with wonderful cartoony graphics and hilarious intro and outro sequences, but the game itself stinks – it's just a simplistic, poorly-executed platform game. For *Road Runner* die-hards only.

4/10

THE ROCKETEER (JAP/US)
IGS, 8 Mbit
1 player
Lovely graphics, but that's about it. It consists of watching a string of mini-games in which you don't really get much say – it's just luck if you proceed from one game to the next. Awful.

3/10

ROBOCOP 3 (US/UK)
Ocean, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 66%
A neat *Robocop* feel, but gameplay-wise this is severely wanting. It's frustratingly difficult, and perseverance is rewarded by an unimaginative shooter with little connection to the film.

5/10

ROGER CLEMENS' MVP BASEBALL (US)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 73%
Baseball games don't come much better presented than this. Fab animation and action viewed through different camera angles make this thoroughly enjoyable.

7/10

ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS II (JAP/US)
Koei, 8 Mbit + BB
1 to 12 players

Loads of interlocking ancient Chinese kingdoms make alliances, split up, then make other alliances, lots of people (presumably) get killed, and we can't make sense of any of it. The recently-become-available US version reveals a simple little game under all the maps and text-boxes, but still not recommended.

5/10

RPM RACING (JAP/US)
Interplay, 4 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players
RPM stands, in this case, for Radical Psycho Machines – ridiculous trucks with big tyres that fascinate Americans. The scrolling's rough, you need clairvoyant powers to anticipate corners, and it uses flickery interlace graphics to no obvious effect. But good fun.

6/10

RUSHING BEAT RUN (JAP)
Jaleco, 12 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP5 60%
The original *Rival Turf*, although fine as beat-'em-ups go, was never a great game, exactly. And the sequel (which is what this is) isn't a great deal better. The graphics aren't too bad, but it's incredibly repetitive and too easy to finish.

6/10

SD DODGEBALL (JAP)
Banpresto, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players
Based on an imaginary sport which involves knocking out the opposing team by throwing the ball at them, this is one of a series of Dodgeball games (*Fire Dodgeball*'s another) and the worst.

5/10

SD GREAT BATTLE (JAP)
Banpresto, 6 Mbit
1 player

Japan's hugely popular Super Deformer series has spawned a lot of Super Famicom spin-off games, and they sell well, no matter how cruddy they are! *SD Great Battle* was the first of the genre to emerge, and isn't anything to get excited about, being a crusty old arcade adventure with really tedious gameplay. You have been warned.

4/10

SD GUNDAM (JAP)
Bandai, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
Again we head off to Japanese RPG-land, this variant starring a 'Super Deformed' (ie squished and cutified) version of *Gundam*, the most popular 'mecha' robot character in Japan. The format is traditional Japanese RPG, but the crappy graphics, sound and use of Japanese text make it unplayable. Impossible to judge.

?/10

SIM CITY (JAP/US/UK)
Maxis/Nintendo, 4 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP1 84%
Build the city of your dreams... then bring it to its knees! The SNES version of this all-time great is probably the best yet (even more user-friendly) although it hardly pushes the machine to its limits. Addictive, in the short-term.

8/10

SIM EARTH (JAP)
Imagineer, 6 Mbit + BB
1 player
A follow-on from *Sim City* that tries to bite off more than it can chew. You're basically put in charge of the entire planet, which would be horrendous enough in itself, but when the whole game's in Japanese... er, no thanks. Impossible to judge.

?/10

SKÜLJAGGER (US)
American Softworks, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP4 58%
A lacklustre piratic platform game that's very easy and not going to take you long to finish. Very weird bubble gum hits.

5/10

SONIC BLAST MAN (JAP)
Taito, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 69%
A scrolling beat-'em-up with a niftier central character than most – he's a superhero with a deadly line in punches. It's a beat-'em-up nonetheless, though, and consequently gets pretty dull.

7/10

SOUL BLAZER (US)
Alternative title: Soul Blader (JAP)
Enix, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 89%

Slick, graphically gorgeous and not entirely unlike *Zelda* (ie an RPG, Japanese-style). Avoid *Soul Blader*, the Japanese version (unless you're Japanese).

8/10

SPACE FOOTBALL (US)
Alternative name: Super Linearball (JAP)
Triffix, 4 Mbit
1 player
If you've played *Ballblazer* on the Commodore 64 before, that's probably the closest to this – football, played between two 'things' on a fast, 3D scrolling pitch. It's an idea that provides lots of thrills in the short-term, but it isn't really enough to justify splashing out this much loot on a game.

6/10

SPANKY'S QUEST (JAP/US)
Natsume, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A monkey called Spanky? Bouncing bubbles? You just wander round lots of similar-looking screens, killing baddies (with the bubbles) and collecting keys. Boring.

5/10

SPIDERMAN & THE X-MEN (US/UK)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 72%
A multi-character platform romp that loses its appeal fairly quickly. Plain and unattractive graphics are the order of the day, only saved by some really

INDEPENDENT SUPER NINTENDO MAGAZINE

SUPER PLAY TOP 5 EXPLOSIONS

Not that we've run out of Top 5 categories, you understand, just that we couldn't think of any at the time. Well, anyway, here's the best and biggest explosions we found...

1 SUPER ALESTE (87%)
They're not called smart bombs for nothing. They're smart by name and smart by nature!

2 ASSAULT SUITS VALKEN (91%)
They're huuuuuge! Courtesy of marvellous Mode 7. Valken brilliant!

3 SUPER PROBOTECTOR (90%)
Another smart bomb extravaganza. Noisy, violent and er, explosive.

4 UN SQUADRON (91%)
When a boss wants to blow up they should look to *UN Squadron* for how to do it in style.

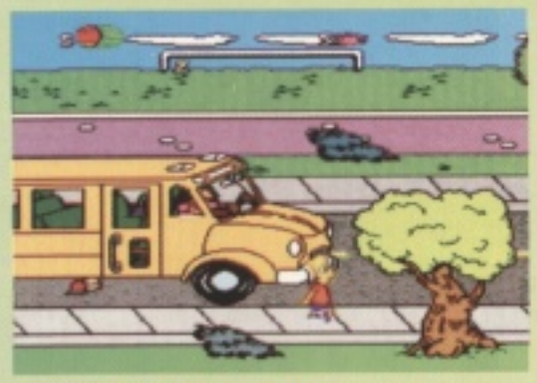
5 STRIKE GUNNER(65%)
These nice explosions are sadly the only redeeming feature of this unspectacular blaster.

INDEPENDENT SUPER NINTENDO MAGAZINE

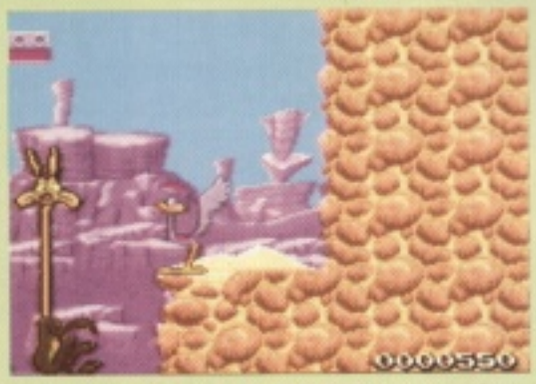
Super PLAY

TOP 5 FUNNIEST GAMES

We like a bit of a laugh here at *Super Play*. We laugh every time Jason's car gets clamped or towed away. We laugh when Matt gets killed on level one of *Super Strike Gunner*. We laugh each time Jonathan puts his Aled Jones tape on. We think these games are quite funny too...



1 BART'S NIGHTMARE (91%)
A nightmare this one ain't. It's so funny it had us all rolling round the floor in stitches.



2 DEATH VALLEY RALLY (42%)
It's not got much to it from the gameplay point of view, but it *is* really funny.

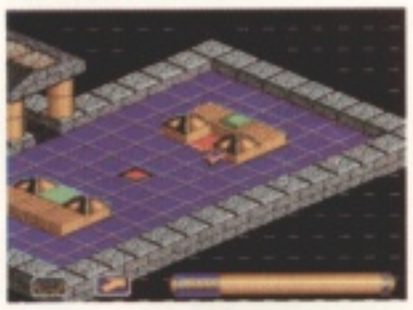
3 DINOSAURS (83%)
You'll laugh until your socks drop off at the antics of the dinosaurs and their cute little pals.

4 TINY TOONS (89%)
This one had a headstart on the rest, as you can't help but giggle at the *Tiny Toons* characters.

5 SUPER MARIO KART (93%)
Well, this just had to feature here, as it's our all time ever favourite game in any category, really.

imaginative music. Fun for a while, but somehow it looks dated already. 7/10

SPINDIZZY WORLDS (JAP/US/UK)
Ascii, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 69%



Spindizzy's sparkle seems to have dulled a little since its heyday on the Spectrum, partly thanks to the game's shift of emphasis from exploration to puzzle solving. A neat little thing all the same. 6/10

STREET FIGHTER II (JAP/US/UK)
Capcom, 16 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 94%
This is the game that's selling SNESs by the bucket- load. It's 'streets' ahead of other beat-'em-ups, and a near-perfect conversion of the coin-op. A must-buy, though expensive on official release. 9/10

STRIKE GUNNER (JAP/US/UK)
Athena, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 65%
Another average vertical blaster, with poor and unvaried backdrops, but reasonable sprites and some nice explosions. A dull game that only gets interesting in two-player mode. 6/10

SUPER ADVENTURE ISLAND (JAP/US/UK)
Hudson Soft, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 75%
Simplistic, *Wonderboy*-style gameplay abounds in this third instalment of the series made popular on the NES. Aside from the ugly Master Higgins, the colourful backgrounds and impressive Yuzo Koshiro dance tunes make this an attractive game. However, infinite continues mean this *is* a short-lived experience. 7/10

SUPER ALESTE (JAP/UK)
Alternative name: Space Megaforce (US)
Toho/Compile, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 87%
Evidence that the SNES can handle a manically busy *Gunhed*-style shooter with ease. Fab sprite handling (coupled with Mode 7) and no slow-down mean it's more a technical achievement than particularly well designed, and it's a bit weapon-crazy. But an excellent buy. 8/10

SUPER BASEBALL SIMULATOR 1,000 (JAP/US)
Culture Brain, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 49%
Another middling baseball game. The pitching and batting are both quite good, but the fielders are a bit unco-operative and the graphics scrappy, with lots of superfluous Mode 7 whizzing-in-and-out. The music's good, though. 4/10

SUPER BASES LOADED (US)
Alternative name: Super Professional Baseball (JAP)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 55%

This all works okay, but it's just as limited in scope as other baseball games on the Super Nintendo, and the graphics are jerky. 5/10

SUPER BASES LOADED II (US)
Alternative name: Super Professional Baseball II (JAP)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 69%
Extraordinarily and uncannily similar to *Super Bases Loaded I*. (See above.) 6/10

SUPER BASKETBALL (UK)
Alternative names: NCAA Basketball (US), Super Dunkshot (JAP)
HAL, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 84%

Super Basketball is famous for its 3D graphics – the pitch spins around and zooms in and out impressively. It's got brilliant sound effects, too. And it plays a splendid game of basketball. However, it's slow at times, and a little confusing, but on the whole, it's great. 8/10

SUPER BATTLETANK (US)
Absolute, 4 Mbit
1 player
The prehistoric *Battlezone* coin-op gets a new lease of life in this Gulf War tank game. This looks livelier than the wire-frame graphics of the original, and boasts some good explosions and exciting link sequences, but, quite frankly, it's still boring. 5/10

SUPER BIRDIE RUSH (JAP)
Data East, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP3 76%
A cute cartoony-looking golf game with some nicely drawn fairways and greens – there's not much wrong with it. However, this isn't as playable as *Hole-in-One*. 7/10

SUPER BOWLING (JAP/US)
Athena, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 48%

There really isn't enough to bowling to fill out a whole game. This one pads itself out with neat graphical interludes and so on, but the real thing's so much more fun. (And much cheaper.) 4/10

SUPER CASTLEVANIA IV (JAP/US/UK)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 91%
A huge, sprawling sequel to the NES games. After a dull start this turns into one of the best platform games ever. More action is needed, but superb parallax and incredible sound-tracks generate an atmosphere appreciated by serious gamers. 9/10

SUPER CHINESE WORLD (JAP)
Culture Brain, 8 Mbit
1 player
A sequel to the popular 8-bit Famicom game *Little Ninja Bros*. The overhead viewpoint changes at regular intervals for combat. Cutish but rather basic and primitive, with loads of Japanese text. Impossible to judge. ?/10

SUPER CUP SOCCER (JAP)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A rival to *Super Soccer*? Not really. This takes a side-on, jerkily scrolling viewpoint and isn't going to impress anyone. That's a shame, because it goes into lots of detail – moves and rules-wise – and there are some nice graphical touches. 6/10

SUPER DOUBLE DRAGON (JAP/US)
Technos, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 68%

A wide variety of moves, and some very satisfying thumping and kicking action, inject a bit of life into a deceptively crappy looking beat-'em-up. Enjoyable, but a bit easy and rather '8-bit' all round. 7/10

SUPER EDF (JAP/US)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 player
A pretty, horizontally scrolling effort, but with some boring and unchallenging gameplay. Similar to the coin-op it's based on, *EDF* has some well drawn backdrops and sprites. But the music is bland, and slow-down spoils the action. 6/10

SUPER F1 CIRCUS (JAP)
Nichibutsu, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP1 83%
This looks ordinary, but is one of the few overhead-view racing games that works. Fast, with a good 'driving feel' and plenty of options to cater for the long-term player. Recommended. 7/10

SUPER F1 GRAND PRIX (JAP)
Video System Co, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
Nothing to do with the popular Amiga *F1 Grand Prix*, this is along the same lines as *Battle Grand Prix*, without the split-screen two-player mode. That means you get to see more of the track on-screen, and hence slightly more warning of corners coming up, but not much. 5/10

SUPER FIRE PRO WRESTLING (JAP)
Human, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Nowhere near as smart-looking as *WWF*, but more challenging (the 20 wrestlers all behave differently, for a start). But in one-player mode it's impossible to beat the computer. Okay, if you can live with the dull visuals and haul in a friend. 6/10

SUPER GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS (JAP/US/UK)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 85%

Another sequel, unique to the SNES. It's got some brill graphics (with loads of slow-down) and nice tunes, but it's very tough – and, as it lacks battery back-up or passwords, it can be very frustrating. The huge levels only have a few restart points, too. Well put together, but difficult. 8/10

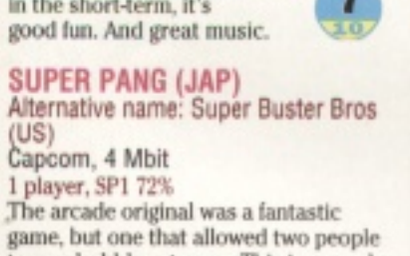
SUPER MARIO KART (JAP/US/UK)
Nintendo, 4 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP1 93%
The best driving game ever, the best two-player game ever, and possibly the best, well, game ever. It's perfect. Four brilliant games in one: there's the Grand Prix game, the Time Trial, the two-player Head to Head, and the amazing balloon game. 9/10

SUPER MARIO WORLD (JAP/US/UK)
Nintendo, 4 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 94%
What more can we say about this huge

game? On the downside, the backgrounds become repetitive, but apart from that it's a gameplayer's dream come true – you'll want to spend weeks discovering every secret bit. Though real *Mario* aficionados tend to prefer Mario's third trip, this remains (along with *Zelda*) Nintendo's flagship game.

9/10

SUPER NBA BASKETBALL (JAP)
Tecmo, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 86%



While *Super Basketball/Super Dunkshot* is the basketball game to go for if you want to wow your friends, this one is a bit more playable, accurate and comprehensive.

8/10

SUPER NINJA (JAP)
Koei, 12 Mbit + BB
1 player
You'd never know this was 12 meg – it has the flat colours, simple graphics and laughable animation of an early NES game. It uses the same overhead view as *Zelda* et al, but being Japanese is impossible to play. Impossible to judge.

?/10

SUPER OFF ROAD (JAP/US/UK)
Trade West, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Another overhead view driving game, but we're allowed to see the whole track for once (phew). We're racing monster trucks with a 3D(ish) perspective. The trucks look great bouncing round the course, and it's in the short-term, it's good fun. And great music.

7/10

SUPER PANG (JAP)
Alternative name: Super Buster Bros (US)
Capcom, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP1 72%
The arcade original was a fantastic game, but one that allowed two people to pop bubbles at once. This is a good conversion, with smart graphics and plenty of speed, but unfortunately only one can play, and that gets boring.

7/10

SUPER PARODIUS (UK)
Alternative name: Parodius (JAP)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 player
A brilliant conversion of the coin-op, and one that easily ranks as the best of Konami's recent string of classics for the SNES. Superbly colourful sprites, a hilarious sense of the bizarre, and some excellent music are just the icing on the cake. Hugely enjoyable (though a little easy).

9/10

SUPER PLAY ACTION FOOTBALL (US)
Nintendo, 4 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP2 71%
A faithful implementation of American football that'll please fans, but not the *John Madden*-basher we've been waiting for. Not a patch on *Madden '93*...

7/10

SUPER PROBOTECTOR (UK)
Alternative names: Contra 3 (US)/Contra Spirits (JAP)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 90%

This is the best platform shoot-'em-up around. Superb use of Mode 7 and an amazing soundtrack put this in the super league. Brill two-player action makes it absolutely essential stuff.

9/10

SUPER R-TYPE (JAP/US/UK)
Irem, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 72%
Beautifully designed baddies, and some of the best graphics on the SNES, make this one of the best-looking shooters around. Not perfect, thanks to jerky scrolling, terrible slow-down and no restart points. It also lacks the best parts of the coin-op – *R-Type II*, surprisingly, not the original game – on which it's based.

7/10

SUPER SHANGHAI (JAP)
Hot B, 8 Mbit
1 player
It's hard to see what's 'super' about it, other than a show-offy intro and the odd silly sound effect, but as a version of *Shanghai*, the puzzle game, it works. Relaxing and compulsive, but not great.

6/10

SUPER SMASH TV (JAP/US/UK)
Acclaim, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 84%
A translation of the ultra-violent coin-op, this is incredibly good short-term fun. No slow-down, plenty of tough bits and bags of addictiveness – you'll keep coming back to it. Recommended.

8/10

SUPER SOCCER (US/UK)
Alternative name: Super Formation Soccer (JAP)
Human/Nintendo, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 83%
This is probably the closest you'll get to real footy on the SNES. Impressive 3D graphics, and jolly good fun to play. But it doesn't really feel much like football as such, perhaps because the rules have been messed around a bit. We're still waiting for the SNES' equivalent of *Sensible Soccer*.

8/10

SUPER STAR WARS (JAP/US)
JVC, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP4 89%
The music is the first thing that hits you – a perfect rendition of all the best tunes from the film – followed by the fantastic *Star Wars*y feel that pervades the whole thing. If you loved the film, you'll love this too. (Oh, and it's great fun to play, too.)

9/10

SUPER TENNIS (JAP/US/UK)
Tonkin House, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 92%
One of the best tennis games on any machine (only rivalled by two fab tennis games on the PC Engine). The range of shots available is amazing. It's not all bashing a ball backwards and forwards, either – there's a comprehensive line-up of tournaments and things to enter, too. Brilliant.

9/10

SUPER TETRIS 2 + BOMBLISS (JAP)
Bullet-Proof Software, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP5 83%

Tetris is probably the best puzzle game ever, but doesn't always convert well to different formats. No worries with the SNES version, though, which boasts lots of extra bits (like *Bombliss*) in addition to a solid rendition of the original game.

8/10

SUPER VALLIS (JAP)
Telenet, 8 Mbit
1 player
A conversion of the PC Engine CD ROM game, featuring the exploits of lots of Japanese girlies but no excitement. It's too contrived, boring and linear to live.

5/10

SUPER WAGAN ISLAND (JAP)
Namcot, 8 Mbit
1 player
Funny, with cute graphics and likeable characters, this is a semi-arcade, semi-text-based adventure for the younger player – we got a fair way into it without understanding what was going on. (It's all in Japanese!) Impossible to judge.

?/10

SUPER VOLLEY II (JAP)
Video System, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP5 82%
Weird-looking with a determinedly two-dimensional perspective. But a wealth of 'special moves', and the fact that's it's a coin-op conversion, make a game that's fab fun to play – especially with two players.

8/10

SUPER WWF (JAP/US/UK)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 74%
Marvellous graphics, and enormous fun to play – short-term. But, all the different wrestlers behave exactly the same. And there's no tournament system like on other versions, either – you win or lose a fight and that's it. *WWF* can't be recommended.

7/10

SUZUKI F1 (UK)
Alternative name: Aguri Suzuki F1 Super Driving (JAP)
LOZC, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Fast, 3D Mode 7 courses *and* tunnels and bridges? This game is extremely well presented, but suffers from the unfortunate no-warning-of-corners problem that seems to plague so many SNES driving games. If you can live with that, however, the split-screen two-player mode is a definite added bonus.

7/10

SYVALION (JAP)
JVC, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 46%

An odd maze-based scrolling shoot-'em-up where you guide a dragon down baddy-infested passages. It looks tacky but is actually quite good. Not much of a challenge, though, and not one you'll return to.

6/10

THE KING OF RALLY (JAP)
Meldac, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 39%
The most eye-catching 3D effect in years, but that's really about it. The fact that there are no other cars on the road, and the unimaginative design of the courses, turns into a battle to stay awake.

4/10

THUNDER SPIRITS (JAP/US)
Toshiba EMI, 8 Mbit
1 player
A conversion of the well respected Mega Drive game *Thunderforce 3*, but it isn't anywhere near as good on the SNES. Guess why? Yep, slow-down spoils the action! Everything else is very similar to the MD game – ie no effort has been made to use any of the special features that the SNES can offer – which results in rather a missed opportunity.

6/10

TINY TOONS
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 89%
The ultimate in cartoon-style graphics, animation and sound, with bags of variety and challenge. It's in danger of being *too* cute, but it's impossible not to love it.

9/10

TKO BOXING (US)
Alternative name: World Championship Boxing (JAP)
Sofel, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Boxing games are very difficult to pull off, and this is the kind of thing that tends to happen as a result. It's well presented, but the gameplay is ridiculously simplistic and gets boring quickly. Steer well clear.

3/10

TOP GEAR (US/UK)
Alternative name: Top Racer (JAP)
Kemco, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 76%

So fast it'll make your eyes go squiffy. The screen is divided down the middle so two players can compete – just as well, as it's dull as a one-player game. The game was developed by Sheffield software house Gremlin, so fans of their *Lotus* games will be on familiar ground here. No smooth Mode 7 graphics or elaborate trackside detail, just lots of driving fun.

7/10

TURTLES IV: TURTLES IN TIME (JAP/US/UK)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 84%
This is a very good beat-'em-up. Superb graphics, some clever characterisation, frantic gameplay, and a terrific assortment of different levels means plenty of fun. On the downside, it does get repetitive, and doesn't take long to finish.

8/10

ULTIMATE FOOTBALL (JAP)
Sammy, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
American football – what a ridiculous sport, eh? Still, that needn't prevent *Ultimate Football* from being a decent game. The problem is that this is so limited in both scope and technical merit that it can't really be recommended to anyone except real footy fans.

6/10

ULTRAMAN (JAP/US/UK)
Bandai, 8 Mbit
1 player
At first it's laughable: a ridiculous-looking giant superhero beating up monsters that look like people in rubber suits. But then you realise that's how it's meant to be. This is based on those dreadful Japanese disaster movies you occasionally see on Channel 4. Laughable.

4/10

UN SQUADRON (US/UK)
Alternative name: Area 88 (JAP)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 91%

Brilliantly designed pseudo-conversion of the coin-op, and still one of the best games on the machine. Although it slows down in places, the action is still exciting. Sonically average, but graphically superb, and a *Super Play* favourite.

9/10

VOLLEYBALL TWIN (JAP)
Tonkin House, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 76%
Volleyball from the people who brought us *Super Tennis*. The slow scrolling tends to knacker your chances of receiving the ball from time to time, but otherwise it plays pretty solidly (and the Beach Volley is something else).

7/10

WAIALAE COUNTRY CLUB (JAP/US)
T & E Soft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 to 4 players
This is the second of three golf games all using the same programming and graphics (the other two being *Augusta Golf* and *Pebble Beach*) but all representing different courses. Accurately depicted and probably the best golf series on the Super Nintendo by far.

8/10

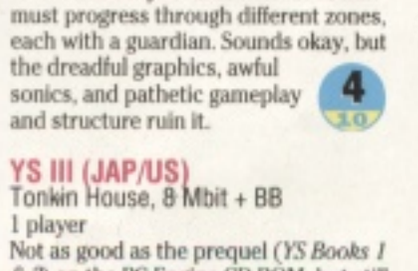
WHEEL OF FORTUNE (US)
Gametek, 4 Mbit
1 to 2 players, SP2 19%
A tedious quiz-show conversion that shouldn't have happened at all. A guest appearance by Vanna White is perhaps the only reason we actually gave it a mark at all.

1/10

WING COMMANDER (US)
Mindscape, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 60%
A big 3D spaceship sim/shoot-'em-up thing. Overrated in its original PC form, and a less-than-sparkling SNES conversion doesn't help matters. but, having said that, it's not actually *bad*.

6/10

WINGS II (US)
Alternative names: Sky Mission (JAP), Blazing Skies (UK)
Namco, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP2 71%



Not as impressive as the screenshots (see issue 2) make it out to be, but still an attractive and atmospheric World War I game. It's also the only SNES flight sim where you can actually shoot things.

8/10

XANDRA'S BIG ADVENTURE (JAP)
Namcot, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 88%
An obscure platform game that ought to be better known. Versatile and very unusual, with a great central character, and the gameplay, though a bit patchy, is brilliant fun, despite all the Jap text.

8/10

XARDION (JAP/US)
Asmik, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
From the makers of *D Force* comes another disaster! This time it's an *E-SWAT* clone – you control a robot that must progress through different zones, each with a guardian. Sounds okay, but the dreadful graphics, awful sonics, and pathetic gameplay and structure ruin it.

4/10

YS III (JAP/US)
Tonkin House, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
Not as good as the prequel (*YS Books 1 & 2*) on the PC-Engine CD ROM, but still a top quality RPG. Instead of an overview of the landscape, you get a scrolling side-on perspective, and though it's not as big as the first two games, it's fun.

7/10

ZAN II (JAP)
Wolf Team, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
A pretty full-screen map view – and plenty of territory to conquer, but working out what else it boasts proves difficult. Another unintelligible -to-Brits war game. Impossible to judge.

?/10

ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST (JAP/US/UK)
Nintendo, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 93%
A brilliantly designed and implemented adventure that puts similar games to shame, in much the same way as *Mario* dominates the platform world – Nintendo's top programmer was involved in both games. *Zelda* addicts may complain it's not quite as long and drawn out as previous games.

9/10

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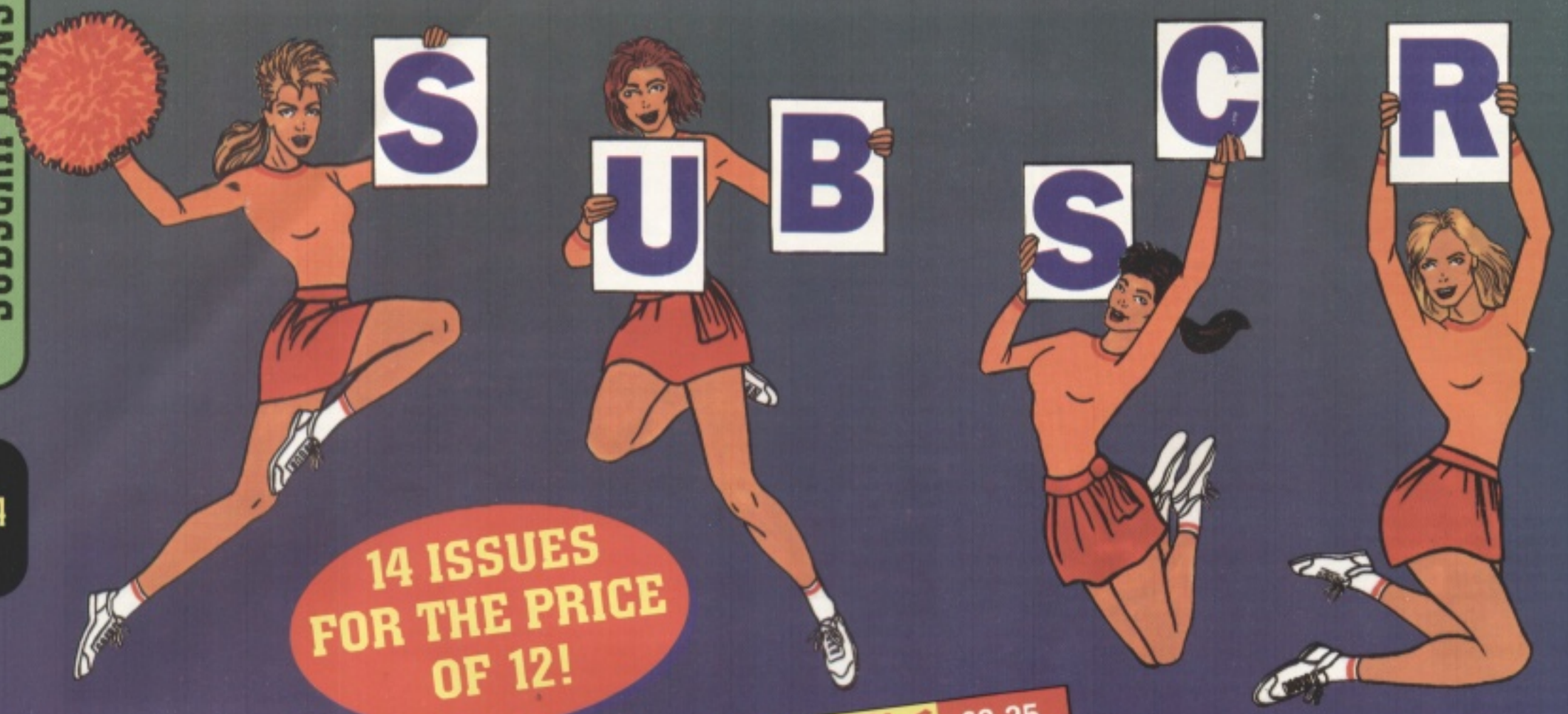

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NEXT MONTH IN SUPER PLAY!

ROLE PLAYING GAMES

Why do Super Famicom role playing games (see pic) constantly top the charts in Japan, yet never (hardly ever, anyway) earn themselves an English-language release? Do the Japanese know something we don't – or are all these games really hopeless, and we're better off without them? We investigate next ish.

JAPANESE GAMES – THE INSIDE STORY

Um, you're probably not going to believe this, but, er... You remember how a couple of months ago we told you how we'd sent a man into Japan to find out where Japanese games come from? And then last month we explained how he'd failed horribly, and we'd sent another, much better, generally more qualified, man after him to do the job properly? Er... Well... There was this awful accident, you see, and... Look, next month it'll all be there. We promise. You ought to see the biceps on Man No.3 – that's him on the left, that is.

TIPS! TIPS! TIPS!

We'll have two complete player's guides for you next month – *Mickey's Magical Quest* and *Bart's Nightmare* are the two we have planned at time of writing – as well as the usual helping of tips and stuff in our Mode 7 pages and (yes!) Ask Ade.

REVIEWS! REVIEWS! REVIEWS!

As you can imagine, the biggie next month will be *Starfox*. Is there a game to back up those amazing 3D graphics? *Super Play* tells all. By no means playing second fiddle will be reviews of *Batman Returns*, *Super Strike Eagle*, *Hit The Ice*, *Super Tom & Jerry*, *Alien 3*, *MVP Football*, *The Addams Family: Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt*, *Powermonger* and hundreds more. (Well, lots more, anyway.) And, in view of the extraordinary number of games Nintendo have lined up for UK release in April, we'll have loads of official reviews too!

Can't wait? You'll have to hang on till Thursday, 1 April, when the next issue of *Super Play* makes its debut.

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CARTOGRAPHY

Baffled by jargon? We know the feeling. So we've collected together all the complicated technical terms we could find.

Action Replay: A special cart that allows you to modify games (adding facilities like infinite lives or invincibility). See issue 5 for a review, and page 78 for ordering details.

Adaptor: These come in various forms, but their basic job is to allow software from one country to run on a SNES from another. (See 'grey import'.)

Anime: (pronounced: 'a-nee-may') The Japanese art of drawing cartoon characters. In Japan, anime is everywhere, most notably in their video games.

Bandai: The company which imports Nintendo games into the UK, and who deal with all their business over here. Current rumours have a Bandai/Nintendo split on the cards, but it hasn't been announced.

Battery back-up (BB): Switch off a normal cart and all your hard work will disappear into electronic oblivion. Switch off one with battery back-up, however, and it'll keep all your high-scores and saved positions safely tucked away for another day.

Bit: A one or a zero. Stick lots of these together in the right order and you've got yourself a game. There are about 8,000,000 in the average cart.

Bridge adaptor: A simple adaptor that lets you plug a Japanese cart into an American machine and vice versa.

CD-ROM: A method for storing absolutely huge games on compact discs rather than cartridges. The Super Nintendo CD ROM drive is due to appear late this year/early next year, and promises to be a world-beater.

-Chan: An affectionate suffix, meaning 'dear', that's stuck onto the end of a name by the Japanese to describe its owner as cute. The recently developed habit of creating small, cute versions of otherwise 'serious' characters like Ultraman has results that are often described as -chans.

CPU: Central Processing Unit, the chip at the heart of any computer. In the case of the Super Nintendo, it's a 65sc816 running at 3.58MHz (sorry, this probably isn't helping much), and it's in charge of all the graphics and sound chips that make your console so fab.

DSP: Digital signal processor. An extra chip included in a cartridge to provide improved 3D graphics, notably used in *Pilotwings* and *Super Mario Kart*.

Game Boy: Nintendo's black-and-white, battery-powered hand-held console.

Game Genie: Hornby's rival to the Action Replay (qv), developed by CodeMasters. See issue 5 for a review.

Grey import: Nintendo don't tend to release games in the UK until several months after they've appeared in Japan and the US. If you want to get hold of them sooner, you'll have to hunt around for a grey import version. The mail order ads in this issue are the best place to start, but, remember, to use an import cart on a UK machine you'll need a special adaptor that costs £10-£20.

Manga: The Japanese word for comic, and the source of many Super Nintendo game characters.

Mario: You're joking, right? Mario is not only Nintendo's number one game character (and so the number one game character in the world), it's claimed he's more recognised by American kids than Mickey Mouse! Not bad for a fat Italian plumber.

Mbit: Short for Megabit. 1,000,000 bits.

Megabyte: 8 megabits – the size of the average cart.

Mega Drive: (*Get outa town! – Ed.*)

Mode 7: A feature unique to the Super Nintendo that gives you 3D screen scaling and rotation.

Multitap: An adaptor that lets you connect four joypads to one of the ports on your Super NES, letting up to five people play a game at once.

Neo Geo: A hugely expensive console made by SNK that's in effect a portable arcade machine.

NES: Nintendo Entertainment System. The earlier, cruder console that came before the Super Nintendo. Rather like John the Baptist, in fact.

NTSC: The Japanese and American TV system. NTSC televisions are less flickery, running at 60Hz, but are also less detailed, than UK ones, while NTSC machines run faster than PAL ones, and also use the full screen for the game image, without having borders at the top and bottom..

PAL: The 50Hz television system used in the UK. Unless you've bought an import machine, your Super Nintendo will use PAL, and will therefore plug straight into your telly's aerial socket. A foreign one won't, though, so make sure you've got a suitable SCART TV (see 'SCART') before buying one.

PAL booster: A piece of hardware that plugs into a Japanese or US Super Nintendo and allows the machine to be plugged into the aerial socket of an ordinary telly.

Parallax scrolling: The process where different parts of the background in a game move at different speeds, giving the impression of depth.

PC Engine: Popular (in Japan, at least) games console made by NEC.

RPG: Role Playing Game. One of those weird games with wizards, orks and action points in. Also occasionally called an FRP (Fantasy Role Playing) game.

SCART: Posh TVs often have a SCART socket which cuts out a lot of the irrelevant electronics that deal with television programmes. If your telly's got one, plug your Super Nintendo into it for a better picture. (And if you've got an import machine, you'll *have* to plug it into the SCART socket.)

Scrolling: Simply the process where the background moves across the screen, kind of like a movie camera panning.

SNES: Super Nintendo Entertainment System, aka Super Nintendo. The business.

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Super Scope: The bazooka-shaped light gun thing for the Super Nintendo, which can now be bought with it.

Sprite: Anything that moves around on the screen. Mario is a sprite.

Superdeck: A convertor, made by Hornby, that allows you to play NES games on the Super Nintendo.

Super Deformed (or SD): A Japanese anime term. When a robot is super deformed, it's all squashed up, with big, cute eyes. Also see -chan.

Super Famicom: The Japanese name for the Super Nintendo.

Super F/X Chip: A new chip that, when inserted into a cart, gives the game much improved 3D graphics capabilities. *Starfox* is the first such game.

Total!: Our sister magazine, covering Game Boy and NES as well as Super Nintendo.

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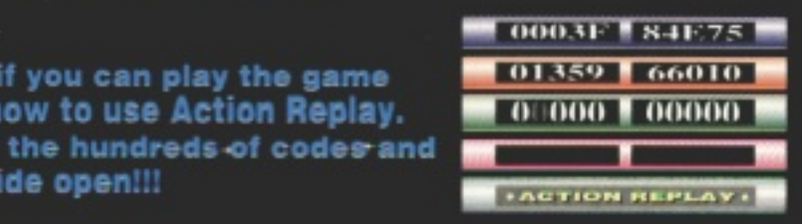

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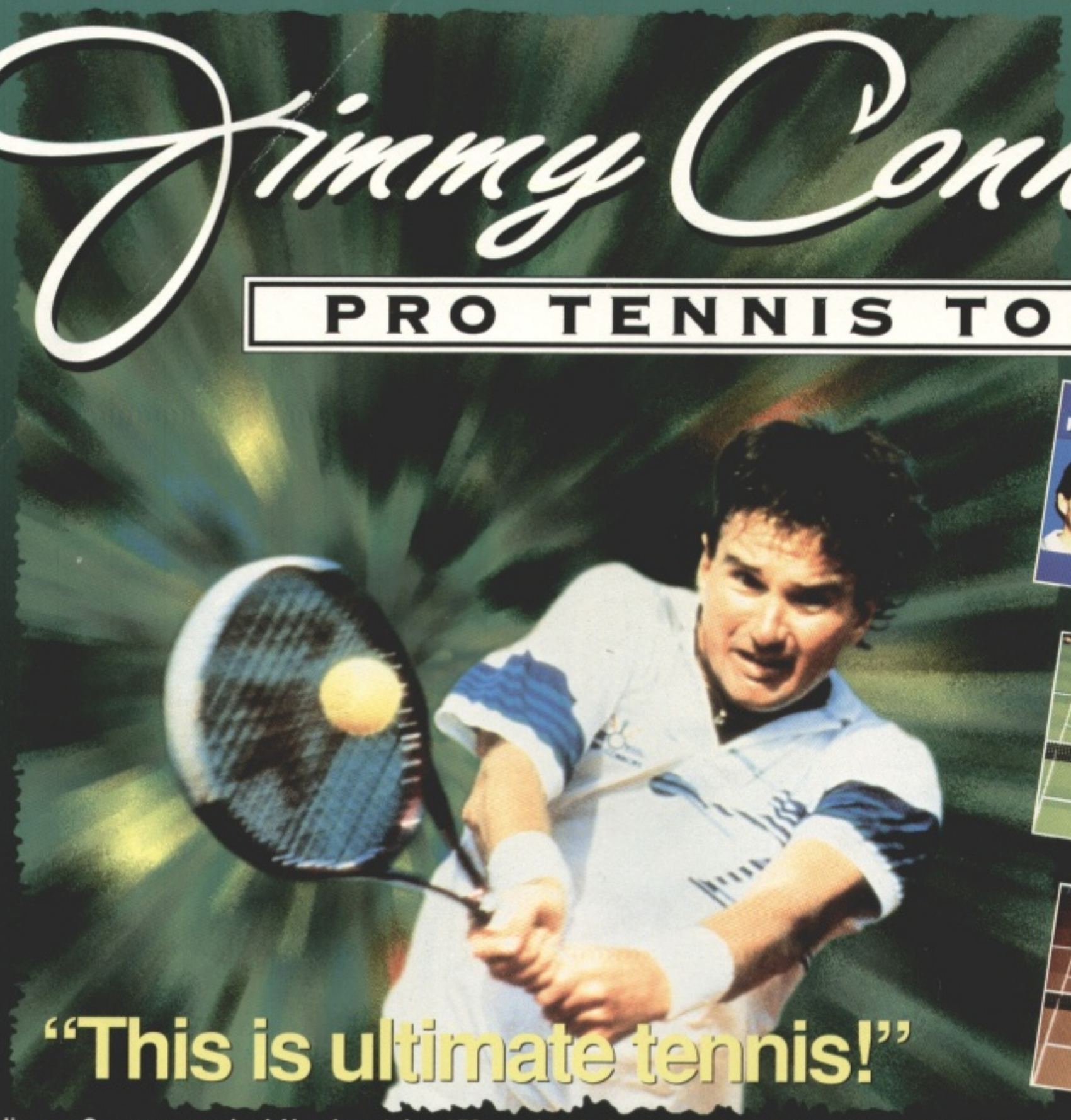

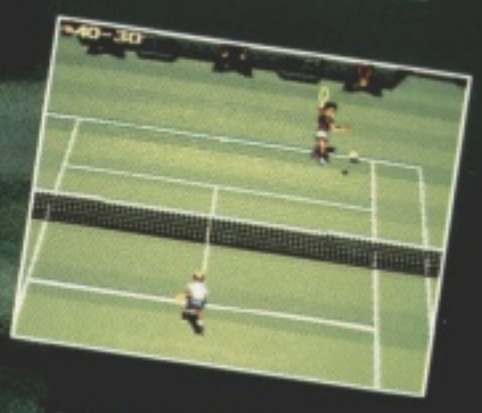

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